THE

FAIR IMPOSTOR.

A NOVEL.

Leſſons of wiſdom have never ſo much power over us as when they are wrought into the heart, through the ground-work of ſome ſtory which engages our paſſions.

STERNE.

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THE

FAIR IMPOSTOR.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to* VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR.

The Camp.

THOUGH fame has beſtowed her faireſt meed, though friends laviſh on me their teſtimonials of applauſe, and my ſovereign has honoured me with a diſtinguiſhing mark of his approbation, yet my diſſatisfied heart feels little gratification from theſe events; becauſe ſhe whoſe praiſe alone can affect me, deigns not to give one line to mark her ſentiments, or own ſhe feels a pleaſure in my

fame. Spite of my affection, ſpite of my reſpect, I muſt complain of you, unkind Victoria! Surely love might, for once, on ſuch an occaſion, baniſh your ſcruples; you have kindly owned my intereſt in your heart, wherefore then deny me this proof of it? Shall ſhe, who only feigns to feel affection, evince a ſtronger intereſt in my glory, and my happineſs, than her who has taught me to rely on the ſweet hope of having gained her tendereſt wiſhes? Yes, cruel maid! Julia has written a letter to me, which has been bathed with my tears, becauſe its pathetic contents were not traced by the pen of my Victoria; how bleſſed would it have made me to receive ſuch a teſtimony of regard from you! Though I know it to be the language of art, nature is ſo well copied in it, that from you it would have conferred the moſt exalted ſatisfaction. Her hypocriſy, and your unkindneſs, have made me ſick at heart. Solitude is productive of the moſt gloomy re-

reflections, and ſociety is intolerable; life will be hateful to me if you do not write to, or permit me to ſee you: ah! let it be the latter, divine Victoria, repay me for the many hours of anguiſh you have cauſed me, allow me to come to Villars-Coteret to ſee you alone; I will make uſe of any diſguiſe you pleaſe, will ſtay as ſhort a time as you ordain, let me but ſee you. If love or pity dwell in your heart grant this petition; deareſt loveliest of women, ſignify your conſent if only in two lines. I incloſe your ſiſter's letter, never was ſuch a maſter-piece of art exhibited by ſo young a creature; I ſuppoſe, in ſupport of our plan, I muſt anſwer it, but diſſimulation renders it a very irkſome taſk; I ſhall make ſome excuſe for giving a ſhort anſwer to it. I am too diſpirited to adopt, on this occaſion, the idea your ingenious imagination preſented. I cannot now, in addreſſing her, fancy it is to you I ſpeak; though I have practiſed this plan with great ſuc-

ceſs when my heart was more at eaſe. Adieu, moſt adored of women! in the earneſt hope of hearing from you ſoon, I ſubſcribe myſelf,

Your devoted,

And faithful

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR *to Madame* NIVELON.

Villars-Cotteret.

I Hope, dear Nivelon, this epiſtle will not interrupt the gaiety you are now participating in your viſit, for I feel diſpoſed to indulge a great deal of ſpleen; and as it will be a vaſt relief to me, I am ſure you will admit it, though it ſhould cauſe you a few minutes gravity. I have juſt received a letter from my love-ſick ſwain, the Marquis; ſuch a ſighing, dying epiſtle, that were I not ſo vexed, I do believe

lieve I could almoſt pity him; but my indignation is rouſed, and were it not, the conſideration of the numberleſs victims among our ſex, whom the majority of the men have a glory in ſeducing, forſaking, and expoſing, ſo hardens my heart, that I rejoice in the pangs I know any of them endure. The cauſe of my vexation is a letter which the Marquis has incloſed me of Julia's, one of her pathetic, heroic effuſions; he pretends to ſend it as a proof of her art, but as he has dared to draw compariſons, from my not writing to congratulate him, vain mortal, on his ſucceſs, I perceive he means it as a reproof: but I thank him, it will afford me ſuch a charming occaſion of getting rid of Miſs Julia, that I can almoſt forgive him. I will tell you, my dear Liſette, the uſe I mean to make of it; he has moſt earneſtly begged my permiſſion to come here; this I ſhall grant, becauſe it will promote my plan: when he is gone, I ſhall contrive to drop the letter

where I am ſure my mother will find it, and ſhe will of courſe come and ſhew it to me; I ſhall then, affecting great regret for the neceſſity, impart the ſecret of the concealed portrait, which I ſhall pretend I diſcovered by chance. The deuce is in it if theſe circumſtances, aided by a little of my eloquence, won't produce the the effect of placing the gentle Julia in a convent; pen and ink, and the means of obtaining them, will be of courſe denied her; therefore ſhe can neither communicate her ſentiments to her boſom-friend, Louiſa de Rancé, nor attempt to move the heart of her beloved. Is not this a maſter-piece of policy, Nivelon? I think I ſhould have made a good Prime Miniſter to Catharine of Medicis. I know you will rejoice with me on my getting rid of this girl, who was always a thorn in my ſide. I declare to you, I ſometimes feared the effects of her pathetic airs on the ſoft heart of the Marquis; it required the utmoſt exertion of my talents to

counteract

counteract their influence, particularly as he is amongſt thoſe who think her handſome: heaven ſend them better taſte. His Lordſhip takes it in dudgeon that I am the only perſon who have not written to him on the acquiſition of fame and honours that have flowed in on him; to own the truth, my dear, I did not think of it, or I ſhould, on ſuch an occaſion, have deviated from my rule, not to truſt a lover with my hand-writing; words, you know, we can deny, but a written evidence may furniſh dangerous arms to an enraged gallant. One cauſe that has prevented my thinking of the Marquis, is my having been engaged ſo much with D'Aubigné of late; viſits to your children in your abſence was a cauſe my good mother readily admitted for my going to your houſe. I own I greatly prefer the Chevalier; and ſhould his uncle move off, and my hopes of being a Ducheſs fail, will certainly give him my hand. His fortune would enable me to

figure away among the firſt perſonages in the province; but while there is a chance that the Marquis can beſtow my heart's ſupreme delight, rank, ſplendour, ad-admiration, and all the eclat of a brilliant eſtabliſhment, I cannot bear to take up with the obſcure ſtation of a country gentlewoman. I ſhall write to the Marquis, and as his fears are alarmed, muſt be a little tender (though he is as complete a dupe as woman could wiſh). I have done for his Engliſh friend with him, and I verily believe could perſuade him againſt the evidence of his ſenſes to any thing I choſe. You may be ſure I ſhall take care not to let him keep my letter however. I ſhall name a fortnight hence for the time of his coming, as I hope by that period you will return. I ſhall want you to keep D'Aubigné in good humour, in caſe he ſhould ſuſpect, though I think my plan too well laid to admit of it. Believe me, dear Nivelon, one of the principal gratifications I propoſe to myſelf

myſelf from my ſucceſs, is, that it will empower me to evince my real regard for you, by placing you in a ſituation you are entitled to. Nature, my dear, certainly never intended that ſuch beauty and talents, as ſhe has endowed you with, ſhould be buried in obſcurity; Paris is your ſphere, and I hope the hand of friendſhip will contribute to placing you where you will ſhine among the brighteſt conſtellations.———I was interrupted here, and a circumſtance has taken place that excites my curioſity extremely. Julia, who was extremely well in the morning, pleaded indiſpoſition to be excuſed coming to dinner. Madame de St. Clair ſent me to make particular inquiries, and to beg her to take ſome ſoup. As I entered her apartment, ſhe put ſomething haſtily into her pocket (which I knew by the ſound, incident to compreſſing paper, was a letter); ſhe bluſhed, and the tears were ſtreaming copiouſly from her eyes. I tried to diſco-

ver this myſtery, but in vain, ſhe was too cunning for me. The Marquis meant to write to her: perhaps he has fooliſhly given her cauſe to ſuſpect his affection; perhaps his language is cold; he complained of the difficulty of acting his part; I am on the rack to know. If ſhe ſhould be undeceived, I am afraid I am loſt, ſhe would certainly betray me to him: if I cannot learn before he comes, I ſhall not know how to act; I wiſh his hand had been cut off before he wrote However, it does not ſignify making myſelf uneaſy; I muſt truſt to fortune, my influence, and the ingenuity I am poſſeſſed of, if I do get into a ſcrape. You ſhall hear from me again, if you do not return ſoon; and as your curioſity will, I dare ſay, be excited as well as mine, I will inform you of the ſolution of this enigma if I can diſcover it. I ſhall try at Miſs Julia's pockets, if I can get into her room undiſcovered after ſhe is aſleep. Adieu, dear Liſette, my mind is in in great agi-

tation

tation from fear, doubt, and vexation, but I am ever affectionately,

Your's,

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to* JULIA DE ST. CLAIR.

WERE it poſſible, lovely Julia, that the ſentiments I have ſo long entertained reſpecting you, could have been ſtrengthened, your laſt letter would have produced that effect. Every communication of your's renders me more painfully ſenſible of the reſtraint I am under; why, cannot I avow my feelings for you to the univerſe! believe me the time that brings that circumſtance about, will be conſidered as the happieſt period of my life. How flattering are your congratulations, how tender and amiable the recommendations you enforce. Reſt aſſured, fair Julia, they

they have due weight with me; but though I could have diſobeyed ſuch kind commands, the opportunities will no longer ſerve; for at preſent all is peace, and likely, I find, to continue ſo. I truſt, however, that you will give me credit for attention to your wiſhes, though occaſions of the moſt tempting nature had preſented themſelves to induce oppoſition. How cruel is it, my deareſt Julia, that I cannot gain any intelligence of the Baron de Verneuil! I have received ſeveral letters lately on the ſubject, but none of them give any information. My patience is ſo exhauſted, that if I do not ſoon obtain it, I ſhall proceed to Paris, throw myſelf at the feet of the Duke and Ducheſs, and tell them the whole happineſs of my life depends on my union with the divine Victoria; if they value that, they will not ſcruple to conſent; for though the title of nobleſſe cannot be proved, your claims are ſo well known, and univerſally acknowledged, that the objec-

tion

tion ought not to weigh againſt my happineſs. But whenever I turn to this idea, it drives me to diſtraction. I feel in a humour now that renders me very unfit for communing with you. Aſcribe it to my affection and reſpect that I break off ſo abruptly, and believe me,

Loveſieſt of women,
Your faithful and affectionate
CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Counteſs* DE LAUSAN.

Moubray Caſtle.

THE unpropitious elements retarded the arrival of your letter till yeſterday, my fair Couſin, as it claims my moſt grateful acknowledgements, I am reſolved no conſideration ſhall prevent my replying to it inſtantly. That ſtriking characteriſtic of your's, a deſire to oblige and ſerve to the extent of your power, was never more

more conſpicuouſly diſplayed than in the communication of your letter, dear Clara; we have all been led by it to remark, with the energy of affection, the many amiable properties you poſſeſs. It was ſo peculiarly kind your writing when ſo agitated, and the effort you made to viſit Lady Auguſta, becauſe you knew theſe circumſtances would promote our ſatiſfaction. Some part of your epiſtle, however, my ſaucy couſin, claims, I think, other return than gratitude. I think I ſhould almoſt ſcold, but that a ſenſe of your goodneſs is ſo ſtrong at my heart, juſt now, that harſh terms refuſe to preſent themſelves. I ſincerely congratulate you, dear Clara, on Lauſan's ſafety, and I dare aſſure you, that you have no occaſion for farther apprehenſions; the victory of the French, *your new allies*, was ſo complete, that there is little doubt of its putting an end to the war. Whatever temptation I might have to ſuppreſs your account of Lady Auguſta, as it was

your

your requeſt I ſhould impart it, compliance would have followed without your employing a threat, my tyrant Couſin. I obſerved the very letter of your command, and read your deſcription aloud; my good mother looked all aſtoniſhment; Miſs Melcombe bluſhed ſo deeply, that I could not but notice it, though I endeavoured to conceal my obſervation; it is ſo natural to draw pleaſing inferences in circumſtances where our happineſs is moſt intereſted, that I am ſure you will not impute to vanity the hope this inſpired. I was confirmed in my ſentiment of the occaſion of this ſweet ſuffuſion, by the ſmile that took poſſeſſion of her lovely countenance, when I came to that part of your letter where you ſay, "Badinage apart, "I really think exactly as you do of "Lady Auguſta Mortimer." If the pleaſure it gave me to conſtrue this ſmile into a language that ſpeaks joy to my heart, is an illuſion, my preſumption will be ſufficiently puniſhed. Lady Mou-

bray's

bray's features relaxed alſo from the expreſſion that had ſo ſtrongly marked them, and laughing at your ſerious concluſion, ſhe turned to Miſs Melcombe, and exclaimed, "What a wild girl!" This is the exact hiſtory of what paſſed on the occaſion; as you hoped to do miſchief, I have been minute, that you may learn your ſucceſs; but for you rconcluding ſentence of the deſcription, I believe you would have hurt my credit with Lady Moubray, for ſhe looked very ſerious on hearing your panegyric. I really think I ought to remonſtrate with you, for telling me ſo abruptly of this marriage; as I am ſo deeply intereſted in her ladyſhip, you ſhould have broke it by degrees. You were right, however, in not dwelling on the ſubject of her princely choice. I certainly ſhall not trouble myſelf with any inquiry reſpecting him, and have fortitude enough to wiſh her ladyſhip and the man ſhe has fixed her affections on all poſſible felicity. I not only accept,

but

but gratefully thank you for your offer of being my confidant. I feel all the preference due to you in this caſe, and in ſome points which you have not marked: there is a delicate attention and tenderneſs in the character of the amiable part of your ſex, that renders their ſympathy and the intereſt they take in our feelings peculiarly grateful, where love is even out of the queſtion. I have already, my dear Couſin, opened the whole of my heart to you; every day augments my ſenſe of Miſs Melcombe's merits, and confirms my opinion that ſhe is the only woman who can ever make me happy. I dare not truſt myſelf to dwell on the idea of the felicity that would be mine united to a woman, who poſſeſſes every attribute my heart ever prized, as the eſſentials to conſtitute a life of virtue, peace, and permanent felicity. I will ſacrifice my inclination, ſtrong and juſtifiable as it is, to my duty. I will not ſeek the higheſt bliſs fortune could beſtow in ſuch a wife as the incom-

parable

parable Elwina, but neither will I try to conquer her influence over my heart. I feel it refined, exalted, and hourly improved by my deſire to pleaſe her: to gain her approbation I cheriſh every good propenſity; for, to do homage to her, and to virtue, are the ſame thing. My mother is ſo extremely attached to Miſs Melcombe, that I ſometimes am led to hope ſhe may be induced for her ſake, to wave her opinions; but then I reflect, if ſeduced by this hope I ſhould be tempted to avow my ſentiments, and Lady Moubray ſhould diſapprove them, ſhould ſeparate us: Ah, my dear Couſin! the idea is inſupportable! every gleam of of comfort would go with Elwina, a long night of gloom, ending but with my exiſtence, would be my wretched lot. I muſt baniſh the miſerable idea. I can, my dear Couſin, account for Beaumont's conduct; the cauſe grieves me; but it is not permitted me to impart it. Thus much, however, for the ſatisfaction of

his

his reſpectable parents, I may ſay that they have no ground to apprehend an illicit connection, (and I hope no diſagreeable conſequence from any other). Beaumont's heart is excellent, and his underſtanding uncommonly good, but he is impetuous; he may be imprudent, but I will venture to affirm, will never be guilty of any thing eſſentially wrong. I ſhall write to him again, for I ſincerely love him, and am convinced, that though a little pique may have deprived me for a time of ſome part of his regard, he will be again ſenſible to its influence when that is done away. I heartily rejoice in his glory, and participate the ſatisfaction it muſt give the Duke and Ducheſs, to whom I beg you will preſent our felicitations on the occaſion. With kind remembrances to Lauſan, and united wiſhes of the moſt affectionate nature to yourſelf, believe me, dear Clara,

Your ſincere friend,

HENRY MOUBRAY.

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR *to the Marquis* DE BEAUMONT.

HAD I conceived it poſſible, my Lord, that you could be ſo unjuſt as to doubt my ſentiments, I ſhould have offered thoſe compliments which you require as a proof of regard. I flattered myſelf that in receiving your vows, in acknowledging my preference, and promiſing to be your's when propriety and duty gave their ſanction, I had precluded the neceſſity of repeating how much I am intereſted in every thing that concerns you; but however I may be hurt at your requiring of me theſe teſtimonials which flow of courſe from perſons little intereſted, I will ſuppreſs my feelings; becauſe I perceive that your injuſtice has inflicted almoſt as much pain on yourſelf, as on me. I am greatly affected, indeed, by your complaints, but believe me you have no cauſe for that affliction you ſo pathetically expreſs.

preſs. It ſhould have been a proof of my feeling the tendereſt intereſt in your fame, that I marked it not by thoſe effuſions which art you perceive dictates. Julia thought to flatter you, my Lord, by an elaborate proof of her intereſt in your glory, but my heart treaſured up its tenderneſs, and would not let the ſentiments that produce its only happineſs evaporate in profeſſions. People who really feel are not laviſh of profeſſion. You muſt have perceived that Julia has words at command, and as no reſtraint from principle is laid on her, ſhe is profuſe of them whenever her eloquence promiſes her any advantage. However apprehenſive I may be of incurring ſuſpicion from your viſit, my Lord, I cannot reſiſt your pleadings, perhaps an advocate within my boſom may influence my determination, you have my conſent to come; need I add my wiſhes to ſee you? For particular reaſons, however, I muſt requeſt you to

delay your viſit for a fortnight; I will explain them when we meet. Believe me,

My Lord,

Faithfully your's,

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR.

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Marquis* DE BEAUMONT.

Moubray Caſtle.

WERE I even diſpoſed to attend to punctilio with a friend ſo dear to me as yourſelf, my dear Marquis, the preſent occaſion would overcome the love of etiquette; but it is otherwiſe, and every impulſe of my heart leads me to addreſs you without waiting a reply to my laſt. I have heretofore marked my intereſt in your fame by a painful proof; it is with heart-felt ſatisfaction that I now offer a different teſtimony. I feel a pride and pleaſure difficult to be expreſſed in the

accu-

accumulation of honours your conduct has won you; receive, dear Beaumont, my congratulations on the occaſion, truſt me they flow from a heart where your merits are ever tenderly cheriſhed. Our worthy friend Lauſan tells me, you appear unhappy ſpite of the favours fortune has ſhowered down on you. This intelligence has awakened my ſympathy; but I muſt complain that you would refuſe me the ſhare of your grief my friendſhip gives me a claim to. I know the relief it is to tell our ſorrows to thoſe who take an affectionate intereſt in our welfare, and ſhould have been happy to have given you every conſolation in my power. I am really uneaſy at not hearing from you, as you are unhappy, let me intreat you, dear Beaumont, to repoſe your griefs with me; believe me there is no human being exiſting who feels more regard and eſteem for you. I will, however, urge you no farther. If the ſentiments of your heart are reſponſive to mine, you will not re-

quire importunity on this ſubject; and though I ſhould deeply feel the privation of an intercourſe that has ſo long formed one of my principal bleſſings, I will not owe its continuation to any thing but your inclination. Adieu, dear Beaumont, be aſſured I ever am, faithfully,

Your friend,

HENRY MOUBRAY.

The Counteſs DE LAUSAN *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Paris.

I HAVE grown half a head taller ſince I received your's, dear Sir Henry, a moſt deſireable event, as people generally wiſh to be what they are not. Men of wit, for inſtance, are often ambitious to be admired for their perſonal advantages, and handſome men aim at the reputation of genius; clever women ſigh for beauty, and pretty women are ſolicitous to be diſ-

diſtinguiſhed as belle-eſprits. I have been ranked among the order of pretty little women, therefore, by the above rule, ſhould be gratified by gaining the title of a fine woman; hence the addition you have given to my conſequence, by making me hold up my head, claims my particular acknowledgements. I aſſure you I am prodigiouſly vain of your approbation, and the plaudits of my other friends at Moubray Caſtle. I fear, however, I have little claim to their approbation on the occaſion, as I have ſo much pleaſure in pleaſing them. You acted like a man of honour, Sir Henry, in fulfilling my requeſt ſo minutely, and you were rewarded. The bluſh that adorned the face of Miſs Melcombe, on hearing Lady Auguſta's praiſe, was calculated to inſpire the idea, that it was not very grateful to her; not that, I am ſure, you, or any body, could impute to her jealouſy of the approbation given to another in any caſe but the preſent. The ſmile that

ſucceeded you alſo put a fair conſtruction on, my good Couſin; I will now own I foreſaw theſe conſequences from my knowledge of the parties, and perceiving you were a little diſpoſed to deſpond, wiſhed to give you hope. I acquit you of vanity, and beg you will cheriſh the ſoother of human life; if it ſhould even deceive, the ſatisfaction it has given is ſtill *autant gagné*. I truſt, as you ſuſpected me of being miſchievouſly inclined, "I ſhall heap coals of fire on your head," by this proof that I was ſtudying to give you ſatisfaction inſtead of diſturbance. I do deſerve your reprehenſion, I confeſs, for not breaking the news of Lady Auguſta's marriage more gradually; you write very pathetically on the ſubject. I really do think, as you ſay, you are deeply intereſted reſpecting her Ladyſhip—how few men would not, when 50,000l. was in queſtion—I really quite admire your *diſintereſtedneſs* in wiſhing her Ladyſhip happy with the man of her choice.

I would not for the world inſinuate that a ſenſe of Miſs Melcombe's merits reconciles the ſacrifice. To depreciate by any innuendo the merit of a friend would be quite unpardonable. If I can be ſerious, I will tell you, in ſober ſadneſs, I greatly approve your reſolution to cheriſh the ſweet Elwina's influence over your heart, not that you require it to inſpire what is amiable, for that was ever conſpicuous in your character; but to confirm it, for moſt certain it is that we, irreſiſtible creatures, have power to work wonderful alterations in you; we often make the bad good, and the good bad. I wiſh your friend, the Marquis, does not illuſtrate the truth of this poſition. Lauſan writes me that he has aſked a fortnight's leave of abſence, and is going on ſome ſecret expedition; if it were not ſome plan he is aſhamed of, wherefore ſhould he conceal it from a friend and relation whom he has ever been attached to? We ſhall conceal it, if poſſible, from the Duke, as he would be

extremely hurt to learn his firſt viſit from camp was paid elſewhere than to him. I am extremely glad you reſolve to write to him, your influence may preſerve him from error. I have frequently heard Lauſan give the ſame character of him that you have done, but he thinks him extremely altered. I have every reaſon to expect that my dear Lauſan will ſoon be reſtored to me; hence the flow of ſpirits that inſpired the *livelineſſes* of this epiſtle, you may read what parts of it you pleaſe to the circle. I ſuppoſe you continue the readings that uſed to make our evenings paſs ſo delightfully. Tell me in your next what author engages you now; for if the ſame book is *comeatable* here, I will ſend for it; it will ſeem to me that I am participating again the pleaſure of our charming ſociety at Moubray Caſtle, when the ſame occupation is mine as theirs. You have often ſmiled at the power of my imagination, in this inſtance I cheriſh its ſweet deluſion as productive

of

of one of the firſt bleſſings nature has beſtowed; it often gives me the company and converſation of thoſe who are deareſt to me. Adieu—Say every thing affection and gratitude can prompt for,

Dear Sir Henry,

Your faithful friend and Couſin,

CLARA DE LAUSAN.

VICTORIA *de* ST. CLAIR *to Madame* NIVELON.

Villars-Coteret.

I HAVE a world of intelligence to impart to you, my dear Nivelon. Fortune is kind to me beyond meaſure; for, to compenſate the diſappointment of your ſtay, and promote my ſucceſs, ſhe has moſt opportunely given a fit of ſickneſs to old D'Aubigné, which has taken the nephew out of the way, while the Marquis is here. I hope, however, moſt

piouſly, that the old man will hang together a little longer; for ſhould he take himſelf off, I could not well keep D'Aubigné from propoſing to my mother, and this I muſt, till I ſee how my other plan is likely to turn out. If I find he is in danger, I ſhall make Beaumont come to an eclairciſſement with the Duke. I perceive no proſpect of diſcovering my uncle; and if I thought the Marquis had no chance of bringing over the Duke, I would not riſk loſing D'Aubigné; but I am ſo fortunate, that I doubt not every thing will turn out as I wiſh. Now to narrative:—When I had finiſhed my laſt to you, I ſat down to write to the Marquis; my excuſes were ſo unſatisfactory, that none but a lover could have admitted them. Beaumont, however, is ſo deſperately in love—has ſuch an exalted opinion of me, and is ſo anxious to believe what he wiſhes, that he half performs my taſk of deceiving him. Delighted

lighted with my letter, he flew here at the time appointed, and was as happy, as though the proof I had given of my regard was of the moſt unqueſtionable nature; but gueſs, my dear, what pretty proof he has given of my empire over him! I told you I ſuſpected Miſs Julia's tears proceeded from his letter; I was right, though I did not diſcover wherefore till the Marquis's arrival; and will own, I knew not one eaſy moment, from the fear that my ſcheme was diſcovered. The meek-ſpirited ſoul's dejection continued, and in vain did I employ every effort to diſcover the occaſion, till Beaumont informed me he had wiſely written my name for her's; that, wholly occupied with my idea, he had ſaid the whole happineſs of his life depended on his union with the divine *Victoria*, inſtead of Julia. Now, the danger is over, I can laugh at the blunder; but it has vexed me horridly, and I have made him ſuffer for his careleſsneſs. He played his game

as ſucceſsfully with her as I did with him; for he ſoon perſuaded her to what ſhe wiſhed to believe. Peace and confidence are reſtored, but I ſee the neceſſity of getting rid of her more ſtrongly every hour. This Beaumont has ſuch a weak heart, that every thing which appears amiable or kind awakens his ſenſibility: this is an advantage to me, were I left alone to the management of him; but as I have two powerful opponents to contend with, it is a ſource of perpetual vexation and trouble. Miſs Julia's pathetics intereſt and affect him in ſpite of what he thinks conviction; then his Engliſh friend moves his ſympathy. I was in hopes he would be offended at the Marquis's ſilence, and not write again; but I was deceived—and his letter has ſo obliterated Beaumont's reſentment, and revived his regard, that it has put me upon the exertion of my whole ſkill to counteract the effect. I dared not openly oppoſe his ſentiments, leſt he ſhould

for

for a moment think the Chevalier's inſolent inſinuation of vindictiveneſs had ſome foundation. Making, therefore, a virtue of neceſſity, I pretended to wiſh for nothing more than their reconciliation, talked with great magnanimity of the virtues of forgiveneſs, and while I aſſerted my deſire to bury the paſt in oblivion, contrived, in recapitulating the matter, to touch thoſe parts which would renew his indignation. This ſucceeded in a degree fully as it related to me, for he was more charmed than ever at my greatneſs of ſoul, and though it did not prevent his writing to his friend, it reſtrained thoſe effuſions, which, in the firſt impulſe of returning regard, he would have given vent to; ſtill, however, his letter conveyed what I feared would ſeal the bond of renewed amity, I therefore managed to ſuppreſs it, my dear. My good mother has not the ſmalleſt ſuſpicion of the Marquis's attachment to me: I have ſo ſtrongly interdicted his tender

glances, that I ſcarcely ever catch him gazing now, as if his ſoul was in his eyes, and our nocturnal interviews in my dreſſing-room give us ſuch ample opportunity for converſation, that we do not require any particular intercourſe in the day; this has tended completely to deceive Julia. The plan might be a little dangerous to a girl in love; but I am ſafe, my dear Nivelon: were I even partial to the Marquis, the high game I have in view would preſerve me from giving way to any weakneſs, as he is quite indifferent to me; my part is as eaſy as it is ſecure; not but that I know how to make a merit of refuſing to indulge his tenderneſs and endearments. What mere tools are theſe lords of the creation, my dear, in the hands of a clever woman! As ſoon as Beaumont is gone, my battery commences againſt Miſs Julia. I know you will be anxious to learn my ſuc-

ſucceſs; rely, therefore, on having the earlieſt information, and believe me,

Dear Nivelon,

Your affectionate

And ſincere friend,

VICTORIA DE St. CLAIR.

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Counteſs* DE LAUSAN.

Moubray Caſtle.

I AM ſorry, my amiable Couſin, that I cannot anſwer your pleaſant letter as it merits, for I fear this will prove a very dull epiſtle: I am extremely out of ſpirits, from a variety of cauſes. The principal is, that our delightful evenings, as you juſtly ſtile them, are broken in upon by the arrival of Lord Deſborough, and his ſiſter, Lady Harriet. They are come too, to increaſe my comfort, to paſs a month

month here. The deſcription I have often heard you give of them I find perfectly juſt; he is a finiſhed coxcomb, and her ladyſhip a complete modern fine lady, with a conſiderable daſh of coquetry mingled in the diſguſting medley. I am already ſo tired of them, though they have been here but a few days, that, I fear, my patience will not hold out till they are gone. I perceive his Lordſhip has affected to model himſelf by the precepts of Cheſterfield, and moſt characteriſtically culling the worſt parts, is the contemptible being ſuch an aſſemblage promiſes; but what provokes me moſt in his conduct, is his inſolent familiarity to Miſs Melcombe. He affects to admire her, even to adoration; and as a proof, in his borrowed ſarcaſms on the ſex, takes occaſion to ſacrifice them all at her ſhrine. I own I am aſtoniſhed at Miſs Melcombe's ſufferance: I ſhould have thought ſhe would repulſe ſuch a puppy, and ſilence his impertinent rhapſodies in praiſe of her

her charms; but ſhe only ſmiles, which the fool takes for encouragement. Lady Harriet too, for want of ſomething to do, or to keep herſelf in practice, plays off her artillery againſt me; but I am not diſpoſed to humour her fancy. Her ſuperficial attainments, which are ſtiled accompliſhments; her confident manner, miſnamed eaſe; and her ridicule of all I think reſpectable, make her very far from an amiable object in my eyes. Our readings are at an end, for books are the avowed deteſtation of both Lord Beſborough and his ſiſter; cards are, therefore, the tireſome ſubſtitute. We were reading Madame Genlis's Tales of the Caſtle, thoſe delightful pictures of the heart, when this diſagreeable interruption occurred. As I know you will be pleaſed with every obſervation of the ſweet Elwina's, I will impart an opinion of her's on reading the Fairy Tales; as you are loyal too, your ſatisfaction will be aug-

augmented. After finiſhing the ſtory, we, as uſual, delivered and compared our ſentiments. Miſs Melcombe remarked, that the preſent age had furniſhed an inſtance, perhaps *unique*, of a monarch's having had a touchſtone of as much virtue as that ſuppoſed by Madame Genlis. That calamity, which recently threatened to deprive a nation of a Sovereign, adorned by every virtue that honours human nature, had proved a teſt as glorious as it was uncommon. Every hope of future favour was extinct in his dependents; every tie of intereſt ſeemed broken; a new Sun appeared to be riſing, and promiſed to ſhed its genial influence on all who ſought its beams; but ſpite of the ſuggeſtions of that principle, which is ſaid to be the moſt powerful in the heart of man, and courtiers, particularly, ſelf-intereſt; ſpite of every allurement art could hold out to tempt from allegiance, the hearts of almoſt every Briton remained unalienably devoted

voted to our gracious Monarch: never was lamentation more deep, more univerſal, than was felt for the infliction of George the Third; never was joy more complete, more general, than for his reſtoration. "I have particular pleaſure in contemplating this," added ſhe, as it exemplifies the truth of two of my favourite tenets; that, in the firſt place, ſeeming evil is often productive of good, which ſhould reconcile us to the apparent misfortunes that befall us; and that, in the ſecond place, virtue forms a baſis of attachment ſo ſolid, that no efforts of time, or art, can deſtroy it. This, dear Clara, was the ſpirit of your lovely friend's remark; the letter your memory and *imagination* will do the juſtice to, my pen is incapable of. To purſue the ſubject of politics a little farther, I have often thought, that, as the generality of people are never ſo prone to diſcontent as when they are the happieſt, it was a fortunate

event,

event, that my countrymen were taught by their fear the value of a bleſſing they were almoſt inſenſible to; ſecure in the poſſeſſion of that felicity, produced by the government of an amiable and virtuous Prince, they had nearly ceaſed to appreciate it duly, till rouzed by the danger of loſing it, their full ſenſe of its value was awakened in their hearts. We perfectly coincide, my dear Couſin, in adjudging ſo much influence to your ſex, and the inferences to be drawn from it, in relation to the welfare of the community, cannot be too much conſidered. I think, however, on the whole, that more benefit than diſadvantage reſults from it; not only, as I believe there are more good women than bad, but becauſe the influence of an amiable woman is permanent, the power of an unprincipled one tranſient. Theſe laſt may boaſt their advantage over us, that they can make us dupes at their pleaſure, can turn and wind us as they pleaſe, but their triumph

is very ſhort-lived, and has this fate in general, with all that reſults from vice, that it finally brings diſgrace on thoſe who are actuated by it. I hope Lauſan's apprehenſions are premature reſpecting the Marquis. I am in daily expectation of receiving an anſwer from him to my laſt; it will probably give me ſome information, that will empower me to judge of his proceedings. I have ſuch confidence in the goodneſs of his heart, that I cannot believe he will ever be led to any eſſential error. I rejoice in the reſtoration of your ſpirits, my dear Couſin, and in the happy occaſion; ſincerely wiſhing your hopes may be ſpeedily realized, I conclude in the ſpirit of genuine friendſhip, truly your's,

HENRY MOUBRAY.

P. S. Your favourite, the Vicar, has afforded new matter of converſation to the neighbourhood; as the occaſion may amuſe you, I communicate it. In conformity

formity to his conſtant cuſtom of rebuking ſome individual from the pulpit, he laſt Sunday obtained his wiſh completely of rendering himſelf conſpicuous. A little boy, whom he had obſerved to be playing with his fingers, happened to repeat the offence as he was giving out the text; but to conceive the full effect of the circumſtance, you muſt ſummon the idea of the pompoſity with which he mounts the pulpit, then figure to yourſelf the profound attention and watchfulneſs of all his auditors to hear the text, he began: "In thoſe days came John "the Baptiſt, preaching in the wilder-"neſs of Judea, and ſaying,"——"Ah! "what at it again; didn't you ſee me "put my finger to my noſe?"—Imagine the effect of this ſally, my dear Clara; it was with the utmoſt difficulty a general laugh was ſuppreſſed; ſome pretended to cough, others took out their handkerchiefs; ſome ſucceeded in concealing

cealing their riſibility, but a titter was heard, which did not ſoon ſubſide; and the Vicar's text is now become ſuch a bye-word, that the neighbourhood are as fond of their "Ah! what at it again?" as the people of Abdera were, according to Sterne's account, of the poet's invocation,

"Oh Cupid! Prince of Gods and Men.

He told us, the other day, "*He muſt* "*do himſelf the juſtice* to ſay he was too "good for ſociety; every company he "went into convinced him more of it, "and that was the reaſon he was ſo much "diſliked—people could not bear his "ſuperiority."

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR *to Madame* NIVELON.

Villars-Coteret.

AM not I extremely good, Nivelon, to give you ſuch early intelligence of my proceedings? My fate begins to grow extremely critical; it cannot now be long ere it is decided, and I have every reaſon to entertain the moſt ſanguine hopes, every thing that I undertake continues to ſucceed. I have got rid of the gentle Julia; my mother's conduct juſtified my prediction (my penetration is not often deceived.) She brought me the letter in a violent agitation, and queſtioned me about my knowledge of the matter ſo earneſtly, that it made my diſcovery very eaſy; convinced that Julia had deceived her, ſhe conſulted with me what was to be done; the reſult of our council was, that ſhe ſhould be placed in a convent. I wiſhed it to be at a diſtance,

but

but could not prevail; for my mother, who carries her goodneſs into weakneſs, ſaid, as there was nothing criminal in the affair, ſhe would not let the puniſhment exceed the offence, therefore would place her among her friends at the Abbaye of Les Dames des Remi, where ſhe might have every indulgence but liberty and the means of correſponding with the Marquis. Afraid to carry oppoſition too far, leſt it ſhould render me ſuſpected, I only obſerved, that being ſo near, ſhe would be more liable to be found out (I am afraid of my fooliſh-brother, or Louiſa de Rancé, my dear) but my mother ſaid, her being deprived of pen and ink would preclude any intercouſe. This point, therefore, was decided. Another circumſtance in this buſineſs was carried contrary to my wiſhes, otherwiſe my utmoſt aim would have been completed: Madame de St. Clair who, as we have often obſerved, Nivelon, is quite heroic in her virtues, reſolved to addreſs the Du-

cheſs

cheſs of Beaumont, and diſcloſe the affair. She ſays, to conceal it from thoſe to whom ſhe has ſuch obligations, would be ſuch a breach of gratitude, as ſhe could never endure to be guilty of. I conteſted this with all my eloquence, but in vain; my mother was as poſitive as old people generally are. The letter and the hiſtory of it are ſent to Paris, but I took ſuch precautions as will prevent much miſchief. Indeed, what I chiefly dread is, that as Beaumont's father and mother have, I underſtand, all the romance of high-flown ſentiments about them, they may admire the congeniality of Miſs Julia's ſtile, and be wrought upon in her favour. I would have ſuppreſſed the communication, but Madame de St. Clair ſent it by a private hand. To return to Miſs Julia, ſhe was conveyed without the ſmalleſt ſuſpicion on her part to the convent, under pretence of making a viſit to the Abbeſs. While we were ſitting with her, the good Superiour, who had been previouſ-

ly

ly inſtructed for the purpoſe, ſaid, ſhe had been informed we had two extremely elegant Dragée-boxes given by the Marquis de Beaumont, who had ſo greatly ſignalized himſelf of late, ſhe ſhould be glad to ſee them. They were preſented to her, and ſhe, ſeemingly without deſign, changed them. Julia inſtantly found ſhe had not her own, and deſired me to change. "Dear," exclaimed the Abbeſs, with affected ſurpriſe, "how can you diſtin-"guiſh them, Mademoiſelle? it appears "to me there is no difference." Julia's face became crimſon in an inſtant. She was then queſtioned as to the cauſe of her bluſhes. Her confuſion increaſed to ſuch a degree, that perceiving no farther proof was neceſſary, the Superior, aſſuming a ſerious and emphatic tone, ſaid: "I "will no longer queſtion you, Made-"moiſelle, your countenance gives all "the evidence I require. The ſecret of "the picture chance has diſcovered; "your correſpondence with the Marquis

" is alſo known: your conſcience, I per-
" ceive, points out the crime you have
" been guilty of, in carrying on an
" affair of this nature without the concur-
" rence of your friends. I need not,
" therefore, dwell on the heinouſneſs of
" your offence, againſt the duty you owe
" to your parent, and againſt the laws of
" delicacy and propriety: your com-
" punction proves you ſenſible to your er-
" ror, but to atone for it you muſt be ſa-
" tisfied to remain here till you have
" conquered the ſentiment that gave it
" birth, and evince by your patient acqui-
" eſcence in the reſtrictions laid on you,
" the ſincerity of your penitence." Julia's agitation increaſed every moment during the delivery of this addreſs; when it was concluding, ſhe ſuddenly aroſe, but her trembling ſteps could hardly ſuſtain her, and ſhe ſunk, bathed in tears, at the feet of her mother. " Forgive me! Forgive
" me!" was all ſhe could utter; her ſobs choaked her utterance, and ſhe hid her face

face in Madame de St. Clair's lap. At that moment I feared all was loſt, for my mother was ſo penetrated, I ſaw ſhe was ready to reſtore her to perfect favour; but the Abbeſs happily interpoſed, and recommended a turn in the garden to her elder gueſt. Julia clung round my mother, and in an agony beſought her to ſtay, ſaid ſhe would confeſs all. That ſhe conſented willingly to remain, but wiſhed to be reconciled to her, to obtain her forgiveneſs. Madame de St. Clair was ſo agitated, ſo overwhelmed, that ſhe knew not what ſhe ſaid or did. I took advantage of it to hurry her out of the room, and when ſhe had a little recovered herſelf, my perſuaſions, which had the air of tenderneſs for her feelings, the Abbeſs's repreſentations as ſhe had reſolved on the ſtep, the neceſſity of perſeverance, added to her own doubts of her reſolution, influenced her to return to the carriage without ſeeing Julia. I own I was greatly alarm-

ed for the ſucceſs of my ſcheme. I find Miſs was extremely affected at my mother's quitting her without taking leave. She was even ill, but ſhe has now recovered her compoſure, they ſay; ſhe may as well, for patience is her only remedy now, I can tell her. Thus much for Miſs Julia, I will now relate my manœuvres with the Marquis. Finding it was abſolutely neceſſary to expedite my meaſures, as old D'Aubigné is dangerouſly ill, I pretended to Beaumont that my compunction for deceiving my mother would not allow me to carry on the ſecret intercourſe any longer, therefore I inſiſted on his coming to an eclairciſſement with the Duke and Duchеſs. I know his fear of loſing me would make him employ every argument love ſo ardent could prompt; if, therefore, ſucceſs is attainable, I ſhall ſoon be Marchioneſs of Beaumont; if I find that impracticable, I ſhall accept D'Aubigné; if one cannot get Aces at commerce you know one contents one'ſelf with a ſafe game.

game. The Marquis departed in great agitation; I have been obliged to write to him ſince my mother's project, to deſire he will not mention the chriſtian name of the daughter he addreſſes, as that would infallibly betray us. I hope the admonition came not too late. A thouſand alarms continually ariſe to diſturb me, and though I may ſucceed in every ſcheme, I encounter ſo many difficulties, and feel ſo many apprehenſions and diſagreeables, that I think I ſhall have earn'd my reward. I am in anxious expectation of hearing from the Marquis; his letter will probably decide my expectations: your fortune as well as mine depending on it, my dear, you will naturally be anxious on your own account as well as mine, I will therefore immediately impart my ſucceſs. Adieu for the preſent. Believe me,

Dear Nivelon,

Ever ſincerely your's,

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR.

Madame DE ST. CLAIR *to the Ducheſs* DE BEAUMONT.

Villars-Coteret.

A SENSE of my obligation to your Grace incites me to this liberty; I hope the occaſion will juſtify me, Madam, for the intruſion on your time. Chance has diſcovered to me an attachment between the Marquis de Beaumont and my daughter; the incloſed letter which fell from his pocket, diſcloſed the ſecret. I felt it an indiſpenſable duty to appriſe your Grace of the circumſtance, and to communicate the meaſures I have adopted. Convinced that you would diſapprove the connection, I have placed my child in a convent, to preclude any farther intercourſe with the Marquis; time and abſence will, I truſt, deſtroy, by their uſual operations, the preſent impreſſions; but though they ſhould

fa,

fail, you may rely, Madam, on my employing every effort in my power to prevent what would be offenſive to you. As the concealment of this affair was all the error I have to charge Julia with, and ſhe is ſeverely conſcious of her fault, I confeſs that I am extremely ſenſible to the ſorrow ſhe muſt feel from her confinement, as well as concerned for the loſs of her ſociety; but, as I deem no ſacrifice too great that marks my gratitude to thoſe who have conferred ſuch infinite obligation, I ſubmit to the neceſſity, and will perſevere in the plan I have adopted, till it ſhall ceaſe to be requiſite. Not to obtrude longer than is neceſſary on your time, I conclude with the aſſurance that I am,

Madam,
Your Grace's
Obliged and
Obedient humble ſervant,
CLAUDE DE ST. CLAIR.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to* VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR.

Paris.

IN relief of thoſe apprehenſions your letter ſo ſtrongly diſplayed, my beloved Victoria, the firſt communication I make ſhall be that of having received your intimation in time to preclude a diſcovery of your name; anxious as I was to come to an explanation with the Duke and Ducheſs, circumſtances perpetually aroſe to prevent my fulfilling my intention; this gave me great vexation at the time, but, as it happened, was fortunate; for I, moſt probably, ſhould have pronounced the loved accents that are ever predominant in my thoughts. Now that I have communicated this intelligence, I will proceed to give a regular account (if poſſible in my preſent ſtate of mind) of all that has paſſed ſince my arrival: and let me claim your commiſeration,

miſeration, ſweeteſt Victoria, for what I have ſuffered, never did an unhappy being require it more. Equally ſurpriſed and pleaſed with my unexpected appearance, my father and mother could ſcarcely perſuade themſelves it was really their ſon whom they preſſed to their boſoms; convinced by your opinion, that a deceit which gave them ſatisfaction, was not only allowable, but meritorious, I told them my impatience to ſee them had brought me to Paris; this had the effect you ſuppoſed; in fact, the late ſucceſs, the honours incident to it, my unexpected appearance, and the cauſe aſſigned, were circumſtances of ſuch ſatisfaction to them, that I believe it was complete; never did they expreſs their tenderneſs ſo fully. Flattered by proofs of affection ſo ſtrong into the hope that they would not deny a requeſt on which all my happineſs depended, I was impatient to lay open my heart to them; your mother's letter occaſioned their an-

ticipating my intention; prepared by your letter, I was on my guard, and eaſily convinced the Ducheſs that it was my meaning to impart the ſubject to her, ere I quitted Paris. She was extremely pleaſed with Madame de St. Clair's letter, and quite enchanted with Julia's, but ſtill I am grieved to ſay, I found the oppoſition to my wiſhes much ſtronger than I had hoped, yet I give not up my expectations of ſucceſs; when they find I am determined, which I am reſolved to prove, they will yield. Let me not ſuffer, loveliеſt and deareſt of women, in your opinion, from the blind prejudices of my relations; add not to the anguiſh of my diſappointment. Should you fulfill that cruel ſentence you half pronounced of baniſhment till I was empowered to make you mine, with the conſent of the Duke and Ducheſs, I will quit my country; never ſhall thoſe who have embittered my whole exiſtence behold me more. But, oh! my beloved

Vic-

Victoria, doom me not to ſuch a reſource, mitigate the bitterneſs of my ſorrow, by letting me ſometimes ſee the only object for which life is worth holding; deign once more to write to me; think what I ſuffer, and doom me not to utter deſpair. I dare not again viſit the chateau; but your friend Madame Nivelon will ſurely favour our interview, if you forbid not my coming. I do not aſk permiſſion yet, to throw myſelf at your feet, great as the alleviation would be to my bleeding heart, to pour out its effuſions of ſorrow, of tenderneſs to you, to aſſure you no power on earth ſhall ſeparate us, or make me give you up. I will wait your pleaſure, but let me hope you will not doom me to a long abſence. I am ſo unhappy, ſo agitated, from contemplating my diſappointment, and recollecting your determination, I know not what I ſay; pardon my incoherence, pity the occaſion, and, oh! deareſt of

women, evince ſome commiſeration for the pangs that are ſo ſeverely felt by,

Your devoted,

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

The Counteſs DE LAUSAN *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Paris.

IF I could have replied to your letter more immediately, my dear Sir Henry, I ſhould have rallied you a little on the the ſweetneſs of your temper being ſo ruffled by the blaſts of jealouſy; but I have been prevented writing, and ſome events have occurred recently that concern me too much to admit of my adopting a gay ſtrain. Your friend, the Marquis, is the occaſion of this concern; he has, perhaps, written you an account of his viſit here; but as, I believe, he would avoid giving you particulars, I will relate

late the whole matter. He arrived about ten days ſince, and as the Duke and Ducheſs had no intimation of his intention, they were moſt joyfully ſurpriſed to ſee him. Never, I think, was ſatisfaction more ſtrongly expreſſed than in their reception of him. I happened to be with them at the time, and was more ſurpriſed than even themſelves, as Lauſan had wrote me that the Marquis did not intend to come to Paris, wherefore he deceived him, I cannot imagine. He told their Graces that impatience to ſee them influenced him to come, which wonderfully delighted them; but I own I think, from what followed, a more powerful motive actuated him. He appeared to me to have ſomething preſs heavily on his heart, and to ſeek an occaſion of expreſſing it, but did not till a letter from a Madame de St. Clair to the Ducheſs induced her to queſtion him. I find he has been attached ſome time to a daughter of this lady. A letter dropt from his pocket diſcovered the

affair

affair to her, and ſhe very honourably imparted it to the Ducheſs, incloſing the letter. I have ſeen them both. That of the daughter to the Marquis, which betrayed the ſecret, has intereſted me extremely for her; it marks a ſweet mind, and that an affection of the nobleſt, as well as tendereſt nature poſſeſſes the boſom of the fair writer; ſhe is, I learn, a moſt lovely creature. The mother's letter evinces her having a juſt ſenſe of the claims of gratitude and propriety. The Duke and Ducheſs were extremely pleaſed with both mother and daughter, which mitigated their reſentment againſt the Marquis, for carrying on a connection and correſpondence of ſuch a nature without their concurrence. Monſ. de Beaumont convinced his mother, however, that he intended to impart the affair, and employed every argument that a ſtrong affection could inſpire to induce her to be favourable to his wiſhes. She aſſured him of its being the firſt and moſt zealous

wiſh

wiſh of her heart to ſee him happy, and therefore if no very material obſtacle oppoſed the union, however high they might have raiſed their expectations for him, they would yield to his wiſhes. This obſtacle, however, does preſent itſelf in ſuch a formidable ſhape, as conquers even the deſire of the Duke and Ducheſs to make Beaumont happy in the amiable object of his choice; you are in his ſecrets, therefore, I need not repeat what the bar is. When the Duke had informed himſelf on the ſubject of the family of Mademoiſelle de St. Clair, he told the Marquis, that till the obſtacle was removed, he would not conſent to his wiſhes. Your friend employed his utmoſt eloquence to move him, argued, knelt, and even wept: the Duke, however, was invulnerable on this point (though I know how dear his reſiſtance coſt him.) The Marquis almoſt wild, and no longer maſter of himſelf, accuſed his father of want of affection, execrated the rank that ſtood

be-

between him and his hopes, imputed to a blind prejudice the oppoſition that he met, which was dearer to his parents, he ſaid, than the happineſs of their child, and vowing to quit his country for ever, if his wiſhes were not granted, left the room. You will judge that the Duke was extremely incenſed at his conduct; affection, however, with the repreſentations of the Ducheſs, of his youth, the ardor of his paſſion, and the merit of its object, meliorated his reſentment, and had the Marquis ſhewn any compunction for his conduct, his Grace would ſoon have reſtored him to favour, but overpowered by his paſſion, the Marquis quitted the houſe, without making any conceſſion, though his mother made uſe of every argument reaſon and tenderneſs could prompt, to urge him to a conduct more worthy of him; ſhe is extremely grieved at the Marquis's conduct, ſo different to what he has ever been; it requires the exertions of all her influence over the Duke to pre-

vent his marking his indignation in a manner that would touch the Marquis very ſenſibly. I wiſh, my dear Sir Henry, you would write to your friend, and repreſent how injurious to himſelf his conduct is, and how very wretched he makes thoſe whoſe ſole ſtudy through life has been to promote his happineſs, who only now oppoſe him from a cauſe they hold ſacred as their honour. Spite of the diſadvantage under which he appeared in his viſit here, I thought him ſo amiable, he diſcovered ſo many excellent traits of character, that I feel extremely intereſted for him; I ardently wiſh your letter may have due weight with him. I wrote to Lauſan immediately an account of the whole tranſaction, and begged to know if he had joined his regiment. I own I have my doubts that he may have put his threats in execution of quitting the country. He told me he had heard from you, and had anſwered your letter within a few days; if he told you his intention, and

you

you know his deſtination, in caſe of his meaning really to quit France, for heaven's ſake, Sir Henry, inform me of it: on ſuch an occaſion, as the relieving friends, ſo diſtreſſed, and who merit ſo much at our hands, it will ſurely be juſtifiable to give information, even though ſecrecy is enjoined, at leaſt to empower them to mark his ſteps, and probably ſave him from ruin. I wiſh to ſay ſomething in anſwer to ſeveral parts of your letter, dear Sir Henry, but my thoughts are ſo engroſſed by this ſubject, that I cannot dwell on any other. Believe me, however, in this affirmation, that I was extremely pleaſed with the obſervations it contained, and thank you moſt ſincerely for giving them; the coincidence of my opinion in relation to our good and great Sovereign, rendered Miſs Melcombe's remarks peculiarly grateful to me. I am much obliged to you alſo for the anecdote of *my favorite*, the Vicar; it produced the conſequence you kindly intended by the communication; for I was extremely

tremely entertained. Adieu, dear Sir Henry, with the kindeſt remembrance to my friends at the Caſtle, and compliments to your *agreeable* gueſts. I ſubſcribe my ſelf, in ſpirit and truth,

Your friend,
and humble ſervant,
CLARA DE LAUSAN.

P. S. My friend Adelaide Dormer left me laſt week. Her brother was extremely anxious for her return, and as ſhe ſaid ſhe believed I could now *go alone*, ſhe would take her leave. I felt her loſs extremely, for ſhe is a very pleaſant companion, as well as a real friend. Before I had conquered my concern on this account, the afflictions of the Beaumont family claimed my ſympathy; it is ſaid we are ſenſible to leſs grief when many cauſes concur to inſpire it, than when one alone poſſeſſes the heart. I don't know whether this is a well-founded obſervation, but I think

think it is with mental as with bodily pain, he who feels the agony of the tooth-ach thinks no torture can exceed it, while thoſe who are ſuffering the excruciating pains of the gout, pronounce that the moſt intolerable of all inflictions; ſo the widow who deplores in heart-rending accents the loſs of an affectionate huſband, deems her miſery ſupreme, while the parent who, with unſpeakable anguiſh, mourns the ingratitude of a child, conceives misfortune has no dart ſo ſharp as that with which his ſoul is wounded.

The Ducheſs DE BEAUMONT *to Madame* DE ST. CLAIR.

Paris.

THE ſtate of mind in which I have been ever ſince the receipt of your letter, Madam, totally precluded my writing,

ting, or, be aſſured, I would have expreſſed my ſenſe of your conduct, and my obligation ſooner. Ever impreſſed with the moſt favourable opinion of you, Madam, from the repreſentations made me, that you had, throughout life, acted in the manner which alone can claim real reſpect, your preſent conduct confirms my ſentiments, and obtains the higheſt place in my eſteem. The Duke is equally charmed with your prudent and generous procedure. Were our own inclinations the only point to be conſidered on this occaſion, they would acquieſce in the Marquis's election. In our opinion, virtue is the moſt ennobling property. The amiable traits diſplayed by your daughter in her letter, influences us to believe ſhe would make our ſon happy, and your alliance, Madam, would be really deſirable to us. But we think ourſelves not at liberty on this occaſion to conſult our own inclinations: it is true it is a prejudice which places a bar to our acting

acting as we wiſh; but our ſituation makes it even a duty to ſubmit to the reſtraints it impoſes, and to conform to opinions which have ſo long governed the ſociety we are placed in. You, who know all the conſequence of this, Madam, will not require any farther enlargement on it. I am ſorry to inform you that the Marquis has quarrelled with his father, for refuſing to attend to his requiſition. I have the utmoſt difficulty in preventing the Duke's acting with the ſeverity towards him his behaviour invites. I greatly fear, that, unleſs Charles makes ſome conceſſion, a reconciliation will be very difficult. You, who are a parent, Madam, are competent to judge of the uneaſineſs this has given me. I aſſure you I am ſo firmly convinced your amiable daughter would promote my ſon's happineſs, and confirm him in thoſe virtues, which it is the ſupreme wiſh of my heart he ſhould cultivate, and, at the

ſame time, ſo ſolicitous to promote a reconciliation, that I ſhould as much rejoice in the removal of the only obſtacle which oppoſes our alliance as Charles. Whenever the Baron de Vernieul ſhall be traced, I ſhall prove my ſincerity, by promoting the union ſo much deſired; but I hope my ſon will not irritate his father ſo much as to produce farther reſentment, as that, I fear, might induce a reſolution never to conſent to his wiſhes. The Duke is extremely unhappy about him. Did Charles know half our affection, or the wretchedneſs he has inflicted on us, I think his native goodneſs would influence him to act a very different part; but I ſtill hope, when the firſt impulſe of his paſſion is over, he will let reflection guide him to what is right. Before I conclude, permit me, Madam, to prefer a petition for the fair priſoner, that ſhe may meet every poſſible indulgence where ſhe is placed; in the preſent ſituation of things,

I think

I think it would be adviſeable that ſhe remained in the convent for ſome time; if intelligence can be procured that obtains the requiſite proof of nobleſſe, ſhe will, of courſe, return home; but, without that, I think it would be wrong to let her be where the Marquis might hear of her. Should their attachment be founded on a proper baſis, it will ſtand the teſt of time and abſence, and they will be happier from the trial; if it is only the tranſient paſſion of youth, you will agree with me, I am ſure, Madam, that the ſeparation was fortunate. To a heart, ſo good and ſo ſenſible as your daughter's, Madam, it muſt give the deepeſt concern to have offended you: let me, therefore, intreat your forgiveneſs of her; kindneſs will operate, I am ſure, more powerfully in producing good in ſuch a mind than ſeverity: your lenity will, I can anſwer for it, make her ſenſible to the extent of her error, and reſolve to atone. The

Duke

Duke unites with me in beſt reſpects, and the ſincereſt acknowledgements. Believe me, Madam,

With perfect eſteem,
Your obedient humble ſervant,
HENRIETTA DE BEAUMONT.

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR *to the Marquis* DE BEAUMONT.

TILL this moment, my Lord, it has not been in my power to addreſs you, though I ardently wiſhed it, that I might mark my ſympathy in your ſufferings. Believe me, I take a ſenſible ſhare in your griefs, and wiſh it were in my power completely to remove them; but where duty oppoſes, inclination muſt give way. You have my beſt thanks for the attention you evinced in making the intelligence I required the firſt ſubject of your letter. I am ſorry to learn, by an anſwer my mo-

ther received from the Ducheſs yeſterday, that you quarrelled with the Duke on my account, as I am convinced of the unhappineſs it muſt occaſion you; and I give you credit for the delicacy which prevented your acquainting me with it. Her Grace ſignifies her approbation of our alliance in very ſtrong and flattering terms, and appears to wiſh very ſincerely that the obſtacles were removed. The oppoſition, I find, reſts chiefly with the Duke, and he is ſo uneaſy at your difference, that, I dare ſay, when he finds you are reſolute, he will yield. Were his oppoſition reaſonable, I ſhould be ſorry for his ſuffering; but as our claim to nobleſſe is well known, though it cannot be authenticated, and therefore he inflicts his own puniſhment, and makes you his victim, I cannot think him intitled to commiſeration. I doubt not, that were you to withdraw yourſelf for ſome time, the Duke would conſent; but I do not adviſe this—I give it merely

ly as an opinion. If I appear to deviate in this inſtance, from the rules I have laid down for my conduct, impute it to the tenderneſs your merits have inſpired, and the ſympathy your affecting letter awakened in my boſom. I cannot yet conſent to your coming here, my Lord, as I think you might be ſuſpected in the preſent conjuncture of affairs. As ſoon as I find it can be done ſafely, rely on my regard for giving you the earlieſt intimation. I am ſo circumſtanced, that I cannot write a longer letter. Remember our compact, my Lord; if you infringe it, by failing to return my letters, I ſhall never write more; but I repeat, it is from no doubt of your honour, but from experience of the number of diſcoveries that have taken place, from letters being dropped, that I am influenced to this precaution. I thought nobody's care in this particular exceeded mine, yet I unfortunately dropt the letter you gave me; and if I cannot depend on myſelf, you will

not wonder that I doubt others. Adieu, my Lord. Be aſſured,

I am faithfully your's,

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR.

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR *to Madame* NIVELON.

Villars-Coteret.

WHAT a relief to me, dear Nivelon, is this addreſs. I never, in my life, experienced more ſatisfaction in writing to you; would you know the cauſe, learn that I have been wearing the buſkin, and am ſo tired with the reſtraint, that to throw it off, and aſſume my native habit, is quite luxury. To be explicit, I have juſt been writing a letter, tender, pathetic, and *ſympathetic*, to the Marquis, and the effort has quite fatigued my brain—I will now proceed to relate the occaſion. In the firſt place, I muſt inform

form you he received my letter time enough to prevent a diſcovery of my name; the eclairciſſement happily being prevented till the arrival of my mother's. I told you I had ſent off the Marquis, fully bent on employing every effort to obtain the Duke's conſent. He failed, however, and, I find, quarrelled with his father in conſequence. He did not inform me of this, afraid, I ſuppoſe, to move *my virtuous indignation* at his *naughtineſs*. I paid him, however, the compliment, knowing it would gratify his vanity, to impute it to delicacy—the Ducheſs's anſwer gave the intelligence.—From repeated peruſals of that, and profound reflections on it, I am led to entertain the moſt favourable hopes of ſucceſs for I perceive, that though they threaten the Marquis, their affection for him is ſo great, and they are ſo wretched about him, that I am clearly of opinion, if he holds out, they will yield, for their own ſakes; indeed, the Ducheſs's oppoſition

would be very eaſily overcome; for my mother's noble conduct, as ſhe ſtiles it, and Julia's heroic epiſtle, have ſo touched her romantic feelings, that ſhe is abſolutely charmed with them. As this aids my plan, I forgive Miſs Julia her glory—mine will come by and bye. The Ducheſs has interceded for her pardon; my mother was glad of the excuſe to reſtore her to favour—I believe ſhe is gone this morning to hold out the olive branch. I got excuſed, for I hate pathetics, and wanted to write to you. The Ducheſs ſignifies her wiſh, that Julia may remain in the convent; this delights me much. Another piece of good fortune has fallen out—D'Aubigné's uncle is recovering, therefore I have time now to practiſe my manœuvres at my eaſe. My hopes are ſo ſtrong now of being Marchioneſs of Beaumont, that I have receded from the cruelty I had threatened his Lordſhip with, if he obtained not the Duke's conſent. The determination is not now immediately

mediately requiſite. How ſurprized and charmed Beaumont will be with my tender epiſtle? and how much more ſurprized will all the parties concerned in this affair be, when they diſcover that I, and not Julia, am the object the Marquis ſighs for? As I am convinced, were the diſcovery to take place before our union was ſecured, the ſenſe of Madame de St. Clair on our conduct, would prevent her conſenting to my marriage with a man whom ſhe would think treated one child of her's ſo ill, and the Duke and Ducheſs would alſo withhold their concurrence, my plan is, as ſoon as they conſent to his union with *Mademoiſelle de St. Clair*, to marry Beaumont privately; and when the thing is done, you know all parties will find it beſt to be reconciled to it. Thus matters ſtand at preſent, Nivelon; I hope you will return ſoon; I ſhall want your aſſiſtance—the Marquis wiſhes to come here—I have put him off for the preſent; but, when you are at home, we

can meet at your houſe. Louis is expected home ſoon, as the camp is to be broke up in a fortnight. He is in Miſs Julia's confidence; I muſt, therefore, inſtruct the Marquis in reſpect to them, in order to carry on the ſcheme. You will, perhaps, be ſurprized that I ſpeak of writing to him ſo freely, knowing my former reſolution on that ſubject; but as I found it abſolutely neceſſary, I have given into it, inſiſting, however, on his returning my letters, for I ſtill determine not to let my hand-writing remain with any body who might hereafter bring it againſt me. Of you, my dear, I am not afraid; my knowledge of your heart induces implicit confidence; and were it not ſo, as our tie of ſecrecy is knit by *mutual* communications, I have no cauſe to apprehend your betraying me. Let the children of romance ſay what they will, intereſt is the only ſenſible and powerful compact in ſociety; your's and mine have long been united, and I hope ſoon

to

to prove, that I have conſidered my dear Liſette's properly. Adieu. Let me ſee you ſoon, if poſſible, and believe me to be

Your affectionate

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR.

JULIA DE ST. CLAIR *to* LOUISA DE RANCE'.

Abbaye de Remi.

A HEART deeply afflicted turns to every object from which it can extract hope, and has often recourſe to expedients in relief of its feelings, which the more fortunate condemn, or treat as romantic. Under the latter deſcription, I doubt not, deareſt Louiſa, this attempt of mine to open a communication with you would be claſſed. My ſorrow ſeeks the conſolation of your ſympathy, and my confidence in that friendſhip, which,

from my infancy, I have continually received ſuch ſtriking proofs of, influences me to make this effort. You have often of courſe been in my thoughts during my confinement here, and I am convinced I am as frequently the ſubject of your's. Ah! deareſt Louiſa, I read all the pity and anguiſh you felt for me when you called, though we were too cloſely watched to admit of your expreſſing it otherwiſe than by your looks; but it has in the courſe of my reflections occurred, that you might recollect a converſation we had once in the Convent garden, on obſerving the holes which were left in the wall for the game, I little thought, when you remarked how uſeful they might prove to promote a correſpondence between lovers, that I ſhould hereafter regard them with a wiſhful eye, as a means of intercourſe between the friend to whom I was then ſpeaking and myſelf. Convinced that you will, with as much eagerneſs as myſelf, ſeek every means

of

of communication, this converſation may occur, I have therefore reſolved to open my whole heart to you, and, though deprived of pen and ink, am empowered by my pencil, and the blank leaves of my pocket-book, to mark down all I wiſh to ſay to you. You cannot be a ſtranger to the cauſe of my confinement here. How the diſcovery of the portrait, and the Marquis's attachment were made, I cannot conceive. I dare not truſt myſelf with conjecture, leſt I ſhould be guilty of injuſtice; accident might have diſcloſed the circumſtance, but I thought my care had precluded the poſſibility of that. Never, never can I forget, my loved Louiſa, the wretched day on which I was placed here, unſuſpicious of the intention of our viſit. When the Abbeſs informed me, and expatiated on the error I had been guilty of, ſurprize, ſhame, remorſe, and anguiſh, overwhelmed my whole ſoul; how was that anguiſh aggravated, when my mother, inſenſible to my

tears, and ſincere contrition, quitted me without vouchſafing to pardon me, or to give me one word of conſolation, ſhe who had ever been ſo tender. I own my fault was great, yet, had ſhe liſtened to me, I am convinced ſhe would have thought the circumſtances of the caſe ſome palliation; but ſhe would not hear my defence: ſhe left me in all the agony of the deepeſt grief---left me a priſoner, expoſed to the ſtigma of being placed there to prevent a ſecret correſpondence with a young man. Oh! Louiſa, Louiſa! what intolerable ſenſations then filled the boſom of your friend; they were too powerful for my nature to oppoſe; I ſunk under them; a fit of ſickneſs ſeized me. My mother, ſoftened by my ſufferings, ſent me a conſolatory meſſage, which, by relieving the keeneſt part of my grief, contributed in the greateſt degree to my reſtoration. You will judge, dear Louiſa, that reflections of the moſt ſerious nature poſſeſſed my mind during my confinement;

ment; they have awakened in me a true ſenſe of my error, and conſequently a firm reſolution to avoid any future act, that ſhall, in the ſmalleſt degree, infringe the rules of rectitude. It is true, that I thought not I was wrong in liſtening to the Marquis, and acquieſcing in his reaſonings on the ſubject of concealing our attachment from my mother. His arguments were ſpecious; but I ought to have doubted the propriety of every ſtep which had not her concurrence. So kind, ſo good as ſhe has been, I ſhould have been convinced my happineſs was dear to her, and that, if ſhe oppoſed my wiſhes, her experience and underſtanding ſaw a neceſſity for it I was not competent to judge of. I have thus reflected, and the recollection of her unwearied attentions to promote my ſatisfaction in every way, with the return I made, by withholding my confidence, has, at times, made my heart almoſt die within me, from remorſe and grief: I, therefore,

ought

ought to think, that "it is good for me "to be afflicted," ſince it has ſhewn me my error in its juſt point of view, and induced a reſolution to avoid committing ſuch in future. I endeavour to forget the Marquis; but, alas! Louiſa, here my power ſeconds not my will; my imagination preſents him overwhelmed with anxiety on my account—ignorant of my fate, apprehenſive I may be unhappy, a prey to doubt, fear, uncertainty, ſuſpence, and grief—heart-ſick I turn from the contemplation of his ſufferings, for which I feel infinitely more than for the ſorrow and diſgrace I have ſuffered on his account: but though I cannot conquer myſelf ſo far as to prevent his idea from being ever preſent to mind, I can avoid any ſtep which an indulgence of my affectionate ſentiments might incite. I will deny myſelf the pleaſure of ſpeaking of him, even to you. A favourite author of our's ſays, that virtue does not conſiſt in being unſuſceptible of temptation,

tation, but in overcoming it. I will mark, by my conduct, my wiſh to profit by the precepts of the good and wiſe. Adieu for the preſent, my deareſt Louiſa; if I find you receive this, I will continue to communicate my ſentiments to you. Uncertain as I am of your ever reading theſe lines, I yet feel infinite relief and ſatisfaction from this addreſs; I ſeem to approach you, and unfolding my thoughts, remove a conſiderable portion of my anxiety. As I know the ſatisfaction it will give you, I will inform you that my ſituation has every alleviation which the kindneſs of the Superior, and the attention of my aſſociates, can give it. I have been ſo fortunate as to conciliate the good opinion of every body in the houſe, and they evince their regard by every means in their power. Once more adieu, friend of my heart. Believe me, moſt faithfully and affectionately,

Your's,

JULIA DE ST. CLAIR.

Sir

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Counteſs* DE LAUSAN.

Moubray Caſtle.

GRIEVED as I am on account of circumſtances that peculiarly affect me, I feel the utmoſt concern from the relation you give me of Beaumont's conduct. I am ſurpriſed at his ſaying he had written to me, for I have not heard from him, and I have never yet failed to receive any letter ſent by the poſt. Your information was, therefore, new to me, but I was more concerned than ſurpriſed at it, as I have long known his attachment, and being acquainted with his impetuoſity, apprehended this conſequence from oppoſition; the more ſo as I have, from reflection and obſervation, been led to entertain ſentiments not very favourable to the object of his paſſion. I have remarked, that a very unfavourable change has been wrought

wrought in him ſince he has been under the influence of Mademoiſelle de St. Clair. Your opinion of the real cauſe of the Marquis's coming to Paris was certainly juſt; in fact, the merit he made of it with his parents was ſo ſhallow an artifice, that I am convinced it was not Beaumont's ſuggeſtion; for when acting from the impulſe of his own feelings and judgement, he is noble and judicious: it appears ſtrange, indeed, that any perſon of ſenſe, ſuch I underſtand Mademoiſelle de St. Clair to be, ſhould have had recourſe to ſo weak a meaſure; but my obſervation on the numerous inconſiſtencies of human nature has induced one opinion, which becomes every day more deeply rooted in my mind, for a thouſand inſtances have confirmed it, that whenever people are led to act eſſentially wrong, however ſenſible, judicious, and penetrating they may be on general occaſions, yet, in nine inſtances out of ten, they deviate ſo much from what common

ſenſe would dictate in the promotion of their plan, that they not only fail of their end, but excite the aſtoniſhment of thoſe who have obſerved their conduct on other occaſions, how they could be induced to act ſo weakly. I could bring many inſtances within my own immediate knowledge to exemplify this, but your recollection will, I doubt not, render them unneceſſary; the cauſe I aſſign in my own mind for this, is the interpoſition of Providence, which operates thus to prevent the ſucceſsful machinations of villainy. How often do we ſee the diſappointment of iniquitous plans, which, from the capacity of thoſe who formed them, promiſed the utmoſt ſucceſs, yet are counteracted by ſome act of folly, ſome cauſe they did not foreſee, which they aſcribe to ill fortune, but which thoſe who trace every event to the great ſource of infinite wiſdom, account for on better principles. I feel extremely for the Duke and Ducheſs; you may reſt aſſured that no exer-

tion

tion on my part ſhall be wanting to influence Beaumont to adopt a different mode of conduct; but I greatly apprehend my ſucceſs will not be equal to my wiſhes, for I may inform you now, our coolneſs aroſe from my diſapprobation and oppoſition to ſome parts of his conduct, inſtigated by his fair miſtreſs: this was in the early part of their attachment, as her influence is of courſe more eſtabliſhed now, I fear I have little chance of convincing him by my repreſentations: however, if you will ſend me his addreſs, (the camp is broke up, I find) I will write to him, and rely on the exertion of my utmoſt abilities to awaken him to a ſenſe of his error, ſympathy for the Duke and Ducheſs, and regard for himſelf, will incite me to this. I hinted that I was afflicted on my own account; a ſevere ſtroke has, indeed aſſailed my peace of mind. Lord Deſborough has avowed his affection for Miſs Melcombe, and made her ſuch an advantageous propoſal, that

Lady

Lady Moubray thinks ſhe would be mad to reject it. Her Ladyſhip imparted the circumſtance to me, and ſaid, Elwina thought him a little too much of a coxcomb, but as he was young, and had been brought up in the gay world, allowances ſhould be made for him. "I "ſtrengthened this idea," added her Ladyſhip, "to the utmoſt of my power, and repreſented, that as he was ſo extremely attached, ſhe might reform him; many characters, more reprehenſible than his, have been corrected by the influence of an amiable woman, and the eſtabliſhment is ſo ſplendid, that to a young woman in Miſs Melcombe's ſituation, trifling obſtacles muſt yield; to be ſure he is not exactly the man ſhe would have choſen, but as ſhe is not romantic, I dare ſay ſhe will, on reflection, accept a propoſal ſo advantageous. What do you think on the ſubject, Henry? Aſtoniſhed, confuſed, and overpowered by the variety of ideas and ſenſations that preſented them-

themſelves at the ſame inſtant, I know not what anſwer I made, ſomething about its being too delicate a point for me to give an opinion upon. I perceived that her Ladyſhip regarded me with the moſt penetrating aſpect; fearing, therefore, to betray myſelf, I made an excuſe for retiring, and went to give vent to my reflections in ſolitude. Of the inconſiſtency of the generality of characters I have had ſo many occaſions to obſerve, that I am ſeldom ſurpriſed when I ſee them act in contrarieties, or diſſenting in their practice from their opinions; but when ſuch beings as Lady Moubray and Miſs Melcombe act in oppoſition to their profeſſions and tenets, my aſtoniſhment can only be equalled by my grief. It injures my confidence in human nature, and enforces diſguſt for a world that preſents nothing in which we can confide. Had any body aſſerted they thought Miſs Melcombe capable of ſacrificing herſelf to a coxcomb from intereſted motives, and lady

Moubray of encouraging her in it, I ſhould have treated their opinions with the contempt I ſhould have thought them intitled to. You, as well as myſelf, have heard them frequently expatiate on the ſuperior advantages of domeſtic life. How much more favourable it was to happineſs, as well as virtue, and how abſurd thoſe people were who yielded the real bleſſings of life for the attainment of ſplendid miſery. How has my ſoul hung on the accents of the lovely Elwina, while ſhe pointed the charms of a life of domeſtic happineſs, of inviting peace and virtue to reſide with her, and ſeeking her felicity in that of all around her; yet this ſweet moraliſt is ſeduced, by the firſt temptation, to unite herſelf with one who has no opinion in concordance with her's, and to adopt that ſtate of life ſhe has ever expreſſed the utmoſt diſlike to. My heart ſickens at the idea of loſing her, though ſhe will have forfeited ſo large a ſhare of my eſteem. I bluſh to think that, though aware of the

almoſt

almoſt inſuperable bar to my union with her, how fondly I have indulged my fancy in repreſenting ſcenes wherein ſhe ſhared my every ſentiment. She was, in theſe viſionary hours, the companion of my walks, the ſolace of my home; ſhe augmented my good fortune, and ſoothed me under the viſitation of evil. I have with her cheered the heart of our afflicted fellow-creatures, reformed the ill-diſpoſed, and rewarded the good; I have depicted her in theſe moments as my guardian angel, confirming my virtue, and enſuring my felicity. Alas! alas! my dear Clara, to what a ſad reality am I awakened! Had I only known ſhe never could be mine, while I poſſeſſed the happineſs of beholding her, of hearing her, I think I could have borne my lot, but that ſhe ſhould be another's, that other ——I cannot bear the thought; every hope on which my ſoul reſted is torn from me!—life has loſt every charm for me! My fortitude fails. Adieu, dear Clara,

I can

I cannot write rationally; but though loſt in what regards myſelf, the claims of others are not, or ever can, be forgot. Send me the Marquis's addreſs, and I will write to him inſtantly. Perhaps, as my doctrine is ſtrengthened by my example, for I am a wretched victim to my ſenſe of the claims of others on me, my arguments may have weight with him. Proper remembrances, and the beſt wiſhes to yourſelf, conclude me,

Dear Couſin,

Your ſincere friend,

HENRY MOUBRAY.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to* VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR.

Bruxelles.

I WISH I could convey to your heart, lovelieſt and moſt amiable of women, a competent idea of the happineſs your letter beſtowed, for I am convinced it would afford your excellent nature the higheſt ſatisfaction, to know how greatly you had contributed to mine. I have peruſed the precious teſtimony of your regard a thouſand times; its every line is engraven on my heart; but dear as it is to me, traced by that beautiful hand, I yield it up a ſacrifice to your will: ever, ever, divine Victoria, ſhall that will be my law. I perfectly coincide with you in the opinion, that my father's affection will overpower his ſcruples. His fondneſs for me throughout life has been ſo uniformly diſplayed, that it convinces me

of my influence. Your arguments are ſo juſt on the nature of his oppoſition, that they have deſtroyed my compunction: I confeſs I have been a prey to deep affliction, from the idea of the pain I know he and my mother feel on my account. Your repreſentations have made me view the matter in a new light. How ſhall I find language ſufficiently expreſſive to convey my full ſenſe of your kindneſs! your ſweet and amiable condeſcenſion, in acknowledging that tenderneſs influenced you to deviate from a line of conduct no other motive could have prompted. The breaking-up of the camp gave me an opportunity of withdrawing without any riſk in reſpect to my military engagements. When the Duke finds I am ſerious in quitting France, I dare ſay he will make me overtures to return. I have taken care to let it be known to what place I am come. If he relents, and they conſent to my happineſs, I ſhall eaſily reconcile them to the ſuppoſed changes

changes of object, by informing them of your ſiſter's conduct, and attachment to D'Aubigné; deſiring, at the ſame time, that it may remain a ſecret; becauſe, ill as ſhe has deſerved at our hands, I would not injure her reputation; her puniſhment will be ſufficient when ſhe finds her vile ſcheme fruſtrated, and her conduct betrayed to thoſe whom ſhe intended to dupe. As my mother always admired you greatly, this will contribute to conciliate her; and as it will appear that your merits won me, I apprehend no difficulty in this point. My being alſo a favourite with your mother, I think, when ſhe learns your ſiſter's artifices, we need not fear any oppoſition from her. With what exquiſite delight does my mind thus employ itſelf, in removing every obſtacle that oppoſes my union with the loveliеſt, the moſt eſtimable of all human beings! an indeſcribable tenderneſs fills my whole ſoul, when I think of the moment that will make you mine,

my beloved Victoria. I received your ſecond letter juſt time enough to fulfil your commands. Your brother was going off the next day. Leading the converſation therefore to your ſiſter, a theme he is ever ready to expatiate upon, I affected to be now convinced that I might depend on his diſcretion, which his youth had before led me to doubt, and then ſpoke of my paſſion for Julia; related my late unſucceſsful attempt with the Duke, the diſcovery of the letter, and her conſequent confinement. He had not heard of this circumſtance, and had been in great concern at not hearing from her, it ſeems. Never did I ſee ſurprize and grief more ſtrongly expreſſed, nor was I ever more ſenſibly affected by the ſight; and, unaccountable as it is, though he looked, when overwhelmed by his grief, the very image of Julia, when ſhe aſſumed her garb of ſenſibility, and this circumſtance ſhould have ſteeled my heart, yet I found it moved

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to a degree of tenderneſs and ſympathy I could not reſtrain. I tried to conſole him, but in vain; he continued a prey to his affliction. I told him I would entruſt him with a letter to Julia, which he might find an opportunity to deliver to her. He aſſured me that I might depend on his fidelity, and in this point, on his diſcretion; for his beloved Julia's happineſs being concerned (as well as mine, to whom he owed ſo much) his utmoſt vigilance and attention would be employed to find a favourable occaſion of giving the letter; and if, in ſpite of all his efforts to gain it, he ſhould be diſappointed, he would return it to me. I could not withhold my approbation from him, though his judgement was ſo erroneous in his predilection for Julia. How ſhould I have loved him, had his tenderneſs been thus awaked for the beloved of my heart. You will find him extremely improved; I think I never ſaw ſo great an alteration in perſon and manners in ſo

ſhort a time. The belles of Villars-Coteret muſt guard their hearts, or he will make fine havoc among them. He is really a fine youth, and his engaging manners, added to the advantage of ſo fine a perſon, render him a very faſcinating being. It was fortunate, I believe, that Louis's affecting conduct made ſuch an impreſſion on me, for it empowered me to addreſs Julia in a proper ſtile. I am ſo ill calculated to expreſs what I do not feel, that the veil would eaſily be pierced, were it not that thoſe who are engaged in deceiving others, are apt to be ſo much occupied by that purſuit, as to render them rather blind to what would otherwiſe be very clear to their perception. However grieved I may be at your prohibition of my viſiting Villars-Coteret immediately, I ſubmit to your will, and rely on your promiſe to give me the earlieſt information when I may ſee her for whom alone life is worth retaining. I am ſurprized,

and

and vexed, that I do not hear from Moubray; my regard for him was ſo deeply rooted in my heart, that I cannot help being greatly intereſted about him; however, ſince he neglects me, I will endeavour to forget him. My Victoria ſhall be every thing to me: her judgement and tenderneſs will render every other friend or guide unneceſſary. Adieu, faireſt and beſt of women; believe me, your idea is never one moment abſent from me. Let me hope you will conſole me in my baniſhment, by writing as frequently as opportunities admit.

Ever, ever,

Tenderly and faithfully,

Your's,

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

LOUISA DE RANCE' *to* JULIA DE ST. CLAIR.

Villars-Coteret.

YES, my beloved friend, I have given the proof your confidence in my friendſhip ſuppoſed, of my leaving no means unattempted to convey my ſympathetic aſſurances, my conſolation, and offers of every ſervice in my power to alleviate your griefs. This letter will prove that the converſation we held recurred to my mind, and that I have ſought to make the uſe of it affection prompts. The device which ſuggeſted itſelf to me will be accompliſhed in the preſent inſtance, for the friendly interſtice will ſerve as a conveyance for the communings of ſeparated lovers, as the incloſed from the Marquis proves. You will be anxious to learn how it could come into my hands. As I need not attempt to convey an idea of my

my ſhare in your ſufferings, and would ſpare yourſelf and me the pain of reverting to the ſorrowful theme, I will proceed to give you the relation of the means by which I became poſſeſſed of this letter. Hearing that your brother was returned, I walked up to the Caſtle to ſee him. As no ſuſpicion was entertained of the poſſibility of my having any means of ſecret intercourſe with you, we were ſuffered to converſe without witneſſes—you became inſtantly our ſubject. How would your ſenſible heart have been affected, dear Julia, had you ſeen your brother's concern? But you know his amiable and affectionate nature, and therefore require no new proof of his tenderneſs towards you. He told me he had brought you a letter from the Marquis, which he had formed a thouſand different ſchemes to convey, but as yet had found it impracticable. I then informed him of my having received your letter, and that, if he would entruſt the

pacquet to me, I thought it the ſureſt way of conveying it. He immediately preſented it, and deſired me to tell you, that the Marquis had ſpoken of your ſufferings and your merits with the utmoſt tenderneſs; and, from his being ſo extremely affected by the diſcourſe that paſſed between them on the ſubject, he was ſatisfied his Lordſhip was entirely devoted to you; this, he ſaid, was a ſource of great conſolation to him under the ſenſe of your preſent ſufferings; and he hoped you would deduce equal comfort from it. The Marquis was ſo amiable, that the woman to whom he was united, had a greater ſhare of happineſs to expect than falls to the portion of moſt women; therefore, he wiſhed you would try to reconcile preſent ſuffering by the expectation of future felicity, as time, he had no doubt, would produce the event ſo favourable to you; for the Marquis's attachment would, he was convinced, overcome and outlive every obſtacle, ſince

ſince it was founded on an immoveable baſis—the virtue of its object. My ſentiments ſo entirely coincide with your brother's, my dear Julia, that I need add nothing on the ſubject, but to conjure you to reflect on all points that will give you ſatisfaction, and avoid thoſe which enforce grief—think of the merits and the tenderneſs of your amiable lover, of the attachment of your brother, the affection and ſympathy of your faithful Louiſa. Recollect too, my loved friend, how ſeldom misfortunes, though ſevere, are permanent—the cup of life is mixed; happineſs uſually treads on the heel of miſery, and how are her viſits endeared by her ſucceeding to ſuch a gueſt! You will perhaps be ſurprized, my Julia, that I ſhould, after what you have written, thus encourage you to cheriſh an attachment you think not juſtifiable, and aſſiſt in promoting a ſecret correſpondence, as you well know how deeply I reflect on the performance of our duties; but the

preſent circumſtance has ſo many cauſes that juſtify deviation from what general events of this kind claim, that I do not think it wrong to favour an attachment, which is ſure to produce the happineſs, and promote the virtue of two amiable lovers, and which will, I am convinced, in time, be highly approved by all parties. My obſervations on your character, from your earlieſt youth, had obtained you my tender affection, my utmoſt eſteem; but your laſt letter has endeared you to me beyond what I can expreſs; your ſweetneſs, your goodneſs, the tender concern you feel for others while a prey yourſelf to the pangs of ſorrow,—theſe augment my regard to its utmoſt extent. Such excellence as your's, my Julia, ſhould adorn an elevated ſtation, that the example might, by being obvious to many, excite to more extenſive imitation. Hence, alſo, am I ſolicitous to promote an union that will place your virtues in a conſpicuous point of view.

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The communication of the alleviation you find in the conduct of your companions was very ſoothing to me; but I was ſure you would gain their good-will, if a ſpark of goodneſs dwelt in their boſoms. Continue, my loved Julia, to mark down all your ſentiments—communicate all your feelings, and be aſſured my heart will reſpond to every ſentiment and ſenſation that animates your's. Adieu, deareſt Julia. Believe me,

Moſt affectionately,

And faithfully your's,

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to* JULIA DE ST. CLAIR.

The Camp.

I HAVE, at length, diſcovered a medium, by which I can convey my ſentiments to my beloved Julia, and impart the

the ſorrow and agitation of my mind on hearing what ſhe has ſuffered for me. Judge my aſtoniſhment and grief by what poſſeſſed you when I heard of the diſcovery of our attachment; the particulars I have not heard, nor can gueſs how the ſecret was divulged. Your brother and myſelf have been engaged this whole evening in ſpeaking of you, in praiſing your virtues, and deploring your ſufferings. He is ſo tenderly attached to you, and ſo diſcreet, that I was ſatisfied I might confide in him. He will more fully deſcribe what I feel for you than I can: I find all language weak that would expreſs the ſentiments I entertain of you, and can only ſay on the ſubject, that my attachment will be as permanent as your merits; and, therefore, you may rely on its ſtability. I have intreated your brother to conſult with you, if poſſible, on ſome means of ſecuring our communication. I will hope that a letter from you will ſoon ſignify the

plan

plan is arranged. I am ſo well acquainted with the delicacy of your ſentiments, amiable Julia, that I almoſt fear to make a propoſition affection dictates; let me beg you to conſider it in its right point of view: regard me as him who is to be your huſband, when fate becomes leſs adverſe; and allow me to anticipate the union of our intereſts. You are probably denied the uſe of pen, ink and paper, at the Convent, and of the means of acquiring them; allow me to remove this impediment to our correſpondence; reconcile yourſelf to accepting the trifle I incloſe, by the idea that I only purchaſe what will revert to myſelf, and beſtow ſuch happineſs on me; diſtribute ſome among the domeſtics, my lovely Julia; it will engage their ſervices and attentions, and thus promote my felicity. Till aſſured you receive my letters, I will no enlarge on the ſentiments that engroſs my heart. Your brother is charged with

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the expreſſion of my tenderneſs. Adieu, lovelieſt of women, believe me, as tenderly, as faithfully as ever,

Your devoted

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

The Counteſs DE LAUSAN *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

HAPPY as I am in my own ſituation, peculiarly ſo now, ſince my Lauſan is reſtored to me, my heart is yet a prey to unfeigned grief for the ſufferings of thoſe in whom I am moſt tenderly intereſted. Your letter, by the powerful expreſſion of your wretchedneſs, my dear Sir Henry, has grieved me extremely, and the ſufferings of the amiable family with whom I am connected, afflict me ſo much, as to make peace a ſtranger to my boſom. We expected that the Marquis would return

with

with his couſin, and that a conceſſion on his part would have reconciled the Duke to him, but inſtead of that, he has withdrawn to Bruxelles, and told Lauſan, he was reſolved to remain there till his parents proved they had a real regard for his happineſs, by conſenting to what alone could promote it. The grief and indignation of the Duke are indeſcribable, and the Ducheſs's heart is a prey to the bittereſt anguiſh. She would palliate her ſon's conduct, though ſenſible to its impropriety, to mitigate his father's reſentment of it, but he will not hear his name; yet it is evident he is ever in his thoughts —this ſtroke is the more cruel, as they had entertained ſuch fair hopes of his being an honour, as well as a happineſs to them. If his nature is really what it has been repreſented to me, I am convinced the deepeſt compunction would poſſeſs him, were he a witneſs to the ſorrow he has occaſioned. You aſtoniſh me by ſaying you attribute the Marquis's

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conduct to the influence of Mademoiſelle de St. Clair, and that you have an unfavourable opinion of her; indeed I think you do her injuſtice. Her letter, as I before obſerved, evinces her poſſeſſing a moſt excellent heart, as well as a fine underſtanding; it diſplays alſo that genuine affection which induces the real welfare of its object, and juſtly ſuppoſes it only to be found in virtue; ſuch a woman as the writer of that letter would hardly incite a lover to deviate from rectitude. I muſt think you wrong here, and now ſhe is confined and deprived of means of communication, ſhe cannot influence him. I rather fear there was ſome latent ſpark of evil in his mind, which did not before diſplay itſelf from finding no competent occaſion to call it forth; greatly do I apprehend that it will now blaze to the deſtruction of himſelf, and all that ought to be dear to him. He has taken a houſe in the park at Bruxelles, it ſeems. Lauſan has ſet a perſon he can confide in to obſerve

obſerve his motions; we find he is there at preſent: the ſooner you write to him the better, though I own I have little hope of your ſucceſs from your application. Perhaps I am prejudiced, as all that has related to him ſince my arrival in this country has made againſt him. I am obliged to conclude more abruptly than I wiſhed; am prevented from offering you any extenſive conſolation on the ſubject of your peculiar grief—I can only aſſure you moſt truly, that I feel for your ſorrows, and intreat you not to give way to deſpair; ſo many circumſtances may yet happen to prevent the blow that threatens your happineſs, that I really would not dwell on the idea of the worſt. Adieu, my dear Couſin. Lauſan writes in reſpectful remembrances and kindeſt wiſhes to the circle at the Caſtle, with your ſincere,

and affectionate friend,

CLARA DE LAUSAN.

Sir

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Marquis* DE BEAUMONT.

Moubray Caſtle.

HAVING expreſſed my ſurpriſe to Madame de Lauſan at not hearing from you, my dear Marquis; ſhe informed me you had aſſured her you replied to me. I greatly regret not receiving the letter, but am happy that it was written, as it proves your continued regard, which will ever be eſſential to my felicity. I often think of you, dear Beaumont; the recollection of the ſatisfaction we ſo enjoyed from each other's ſociety, the ſenſe of your numerous virtues, the promiſes you gave of being an honour to your family and your country—the hopes I entertained that our friendſhip would be as permanent as our exiſtence, and ſoothe both in every ſtage of it; theſe reflections preſs on my mind, and induce an anxious intereſt in your welfare, that will not be content to reſt

reſt within the bounds of fruitleſs good wiſhes: I have hence inquired of you when I wrote to Clara, grievous to my ſoul has been her recent information. Ah, Beaumont! little effect as experience has taught me to hope from advice, remonſtrances, or any repreſentations that oppoſe a determined inclination, I would attempt even impoſſible things, while there was any chance of reclaiming a friend, or making him ſenſible to what his real welfare depends on. I know your heart, dear Marquis; never can it experience permanent peace while you deviate from rectitude, or make others wretched; ſophiſtry or paſſion may for a while miſlead you, but your ſoul is too virtuous to be happy if your conduct is eſſentially erroneous. You have quarrelled with the Duke, I find, have threatened never to return to your native country, unleſs he conſents to an union which muſt lead him to break through the laws impoſed on him by what he holds more

dear than his exiſtence. A train of anceſtors, the nobleſt in France, have bequeathed him the ſacred depoſit of what, from cuſtoms venerated in your country, they deem their honour, to them he holds himſelf accountable, as well as to the rules of that ſociety in which he is placed. His eminent ſtation claims, in his opinion, a ſtricter obſervance of conduct, as it ſerves for an example to ſo many; an error in him would ſpread evil among thouſands, who would plead his as their excuſe. He, I am convinced, would yield his exiſtence to promote your happineſs ſooner than infringe his rectitude. I need not tell you how ſtrongly theſe points are enforced in your country. They tell me you have put your threat in execution, that you have actually retired to Bruxelles, and too well has the conſequence been painted to me, in the agonizing feelings of your excellent parents. You muſt know, from the whole tenor of their conduct, how tenderly they loved you: you

was

was their pride, their hope, their glory; to you they looked with delight and confidence as brightening the evening of their day, repaying the attentions they had uniformly evinced, by being virtuous and happy: with anguiſh unutterable they now believe every bright proſpect reverſed—their future lives doomed to wretchedneſs, the portion of bitterneſs adminiſtered by that hand from which they hoped to receive every future comfort, by him whoſe ſatisfaction had ever been their firſt object. Could I deſcribe, or you conceive, my dear Marquis, the deep affliction you have cauſed, you would, *I am ſure you would*, renounce every thing that oppoſed their claims on you, and fly to reſtore the peace you have deſtroyed. If an opinion that the tenderneſs of the Duke will overpower his ſcruples, miſleads you, yield the miſtaken notion, dear Beaumont; he may loſe his exiſtence in the ſtruggle, but never will he be prevailed on to give up his reſolution.

ſolution. Your amiable mother would be, perhaps, leſs firm, but, were ſhe diſpoſed to exert her influence in a point where her huſband feels his honour intereſted, I am convinced, from the repreſentations made me, it would be in vain; ſhe can only, therefore, attempt to palliate your conduct to the Duke, and weep in private over her fate. Often has it been obſerved, that it is eaſy to adviſe in points where we don't feel; that we can recommend to others what under the ſame circumſtances we ſhould not practiſe; and hence argument loſes its force. But my opinions cannot be thus arraigned, thus weakened; I have practiſed what I recommend, have given to duty, to the claims of others, every hope that brightened exiſtence. Feeling the tendereſt the moſt ardent paſſion, the higheſt eſteem, the perfect conviction of excellence in the lovelieſt of women, a daily obſerver of her virtues and her charms; I have yet conquered my ardent wiſh to

avow

avow my affections, and attempt to make an intereſt in her heart. The effort has been a ſource of unutterable anguiſh, but reflection on the ſubject brings conſolation; and to feel that I have done right, will ſoothe me in every ſorrow that may fall to my lot in this chequer'd life. He alone is completely wretched who, when affliction aſſails, and adverſity pours her ſtorms upon him, has not the refuge of virtue to ſhelter him, who finds no conſolation from referring to the tenor of his paſt conduct. Let me requeſt your attention to what I have written, my dear friend; it is ſuggeſted, believe me, by genuine affection; I am convinced (though you are, perhaps, ignorant of the extent of the miſery you have placed in the hearts of your affectionate parents) that you cannot be happy; be aſſured, Beaumont, time will ſharpen the arrows of ſelf-reproach; they will pierce to your inmoſt ſoul, and though you ſhould obtain the object of your purſuit, will make you wretched, even in the boſom of love. By

the ſacred ties of friendſhip, of filial affection, I conjure you to reconcile yourſelf to your parents, to take away the dagger you have planted in their hearts. Be patient, dear Marquis, *your* caſe is not hopeleſs, time *may*, and probably *will*, produce a favourable change for you, and unite you with honour to your beloved miſtreſs, but to me even hope is loſt, yet will I perſevere to the end. Let me hear from you. If the ſentiments my attachment to you have influenced me to offer, produce the deſired, effect my ſoul will taſte that conſolation it ſo greatly needs; and judging of your feelings by my own, that you would do much to comfort an afflicted friend, I will encourage the hope of your being moved by my repreſentations to reſtore peace to your afflicted parents, and thus ſecure to yourſelf the only permanent baſis of felicity, the reflection of having acted right. Adieu, dear Beaumont. Believe me, moſt faithfully and affectionately,

Your friend,

HENRY MOUBRAY.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Bruxelles.

NOT a day can I ſuffer to elapſe, dear Moubray, without replying to your's, it has penetrated my ſoul, awakened the bittereſt remorſe, the keeneſt anguiſh. I ſee my error, you have enlightened my mind, and deſtroyed the illuſions of ſophiſtry. I feel with ſhame and horror the crime, the baſeneſs, of practiſing on the tenderneſs of my parents, taking advantage of that affection which ſhould have engaged my gratitude and obedience, to oblige them, to give up what they conſider a ſacred point. Sincere is my penitence, yet I dare not approach them: oh, Moubray! complete your friendly undertaking, plead my cauſe, paint my ſorrow, my ſelf-reproach, intercede for pardon; you cannot employ too much energy; you knew my heart better than I

did myſelf; and I will hope, that as you were ſo juſt in your opinion of my wretchedneſs, you are not deceived in your ſuppoſition of my virtue; though awhile overpowered, it is not deſtroyed. Renewed by your affecting repreſentations, I yield to your arguments: but, oh! Moubray, Moubray, my ſoul dies within me at the idea of what I have to undergo.—The lovely miſtreſs of my heart, dearer than light or life, who only can give a joy to my future exiſtence, ſhe, I fear, will renounce me; I know her feelings are wounded by the heſitation of my family; ſhe, conſcious as ſhe ought of her worth, ill brooks the rejection; I have too much cauſe to think ſhe will not conſent to a protracted engagement—ſhould I loſe her, the verieſt wretch this earth contains would be bleſſed in compariſon with me; thus divided, thus torn, my ſoul is ſick unto death, but I will yield to the ſuggeſtions of duty; convinced by your arguments, won by your example,

example, I will throw myſelf on the mercy of my parents. Write to them inſtantly as you love me, deareſt Moubray; perfect your noble plan, ſue for my forgiveneſs, aſſure them that my future life, though ſad and ſorrowful muſt be its tenor, ſhall be devoted to atone for my crime, and to promote their felicity whatever the price my heart pays. Adieu, adieu; overwhelmed with anguiſh, I can write no more, than to offer you my deareſt, beſt acknowledgements for the friendly part you have taken. Feeble is this tranſcript of my heart, but your's will do me more juſtice, will convince you how gratefully, how affectionately,

I am your friend,

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Counteſs* DE LAUSAN.

Moubray Caſtle.

IMMEDIATELY on the receipt of your's, dear Clara, I addreſt the Marquis, and am ſo happy as to have awakened him to a real ſenſe of his error: he requeſts my interceſſion from a ſenſe of his unworthineſs to obtain pardon; as I think his letter will deſcribe his contrition and amiable feelings more powerfully than any repreſentations, I incloſe it, and moſt ardently do I hope it may produce the effect of reſtoring him to the favour of his excellent parents, and giving peace once more a place in their boſoms. They will ſee how great the ſacrifice he makes to them, will hence judge of his affection, and pity for his ſufferings will move them to extend their pardon ſoon, in relief of ſome of that anguiſh which preys on his heart. Pierced as

mine

mine is by ſorrow, I feel his affliction ſenſibly, I am but too well enabled to judge of its extent. Had I been capable of encouraging the vague hope you recommend, my dear Couſin, ſhort-lived would have been its cheering influence, for certainty now baniſhes it for ever. Lord Deſborough is gone to London for the expreſs purpoſe, as Lady Moubray informs me, of making preparations for his union with Miſs Melcombe. In vain do I call reaſon, philoſophy, and pride, to my aid, all their aſſiſtance is too weak to bear me up againſt this cruel ſtroke, every ray of felicity is loſt to me, life preſents the view of a dreary waſte, no companion to cheer my hours—never can my heart own another miſtreſs; ſhe was, ſhe ſeemed at leaſt, all that my imagination had ever ſought; I have been deceived in her, and to find another thus graced, thus adorned, by every beauty, every apparent excellence, is, perhaps, impoſſible; but if not, to me, at leaſt,

ſhe muſt remain unknown, for never ſhall I ſeek her. Formed to find my happineſs only in domeſtic life, the world contains nought that can conſole or cheer me; I look around me, and perceive no reſting place; my affections, my tenderneſs, my wiſh to promote and to ſhare the felicity of a beloved companion, all, all, are fruitleſs. Uſeleſs to the world and a burden to myſelf, I hourly feel the cruel pangs of the deepeſt affliction; yet prone ſtill to flatter myſelf, I ſometimes fancy I read pity in the beautiful eyes of Elwina; nay, ſo far has the deluſion deceived me, that tears have even ſeemed ready to ſtart from her eyes, when ſhe has found me abſorbed in one of my heart-rending reveries: ſhe inquires of my health ſo tenderly, that for a moment I forget the dread certainty of her engagement, forget the inſuperable barrier, forget every thing but her and love, and am ready to ſink at her feet, to avow my tenderneſs, and

claim

claim a return; but recollection, and all its train of torments come to rouſe me to a ſenſe of every ſorrowful truth; I burſt from her, and with maddening ſenſations ſeek ſome ſolitude where I can meditate and grieve unmoleſted. To ſtay here when the ceremony was performed, would, I am convinced, totally deprive me of reaſon; I will fly, I will own to Lady Moubray the occaſion. It will be cruel to bring ſuch an unhappy being as I ſhall be to poiſon your felicity, dear Clara: I ſhall, therefore, direct my ſteps to Switzerland or Italy; time, and the ſuggeſtions of religion, may compoſe my diſtracted mind: of the influence of the laſt I cannot doubt, though under the firſt impulſe of a grief like mine, that muſt embitter my whole life, I do not attend to its ſalutary counſels. Frail and imperfect beings as we are, how rarely can we act at all times, and on all occaſions, exactly up to our ſenſe and knowledge of what is right. I feel that un-

limited ſubmiſſion to the Almighty Will, and a cheerful acquieſcence in his diſpenſations, is right, but, nature oppoſes the efforts of my ſoul, and enforces me to lament what I ought to yield to without repining. But though I acutely feel, and lament my misfortune, yet never has a murmur ariſen in my heart; I cannot be all I wiſh, yet as far as human weakneſs allows, I will endeavour to become what I ought. It is cruel in me to wound your boſom, my amiable Couſin, who take ſo great a ſhare in the ſorrows of your friends, with a recital of my grief; but the effuſions of an afflicted heart burſt every bound reaſon preſcribes to them, and ſeek relief from the ſympathy of friendſhip; of your's I am aſſured, forgive me for taxing it ſo highly, for wounding you with the melancholy plaints of ſuch an egotiſt as I am become. It will be a ſenſible comfort to me, amidſt my own ſufferings, if I have contributed to reſtore the peace of the amiable Beaumonts.

monts. I hope ſoon to hear that all parties are reconciled, great part of that uneaſineſs which now interrupts your happineſs will then be deſtroyed. That you may enjoy perfect and permanent happineſs is the ſincere wiſh of, dear Clara,

Your faithful friend,
and Couſin,
HENRY MOUBRAY.

Friendly remembrances attend Lauſan, and reſpects to the Duke and Ducheſs.

The Counteſs DE LAUSAN *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Paris.

TO add to grief like your's, dear Sir Henry, inſtead of giving you conſolation, is a truly painful taſk to me; but I know you will be ſolicitous to learn the

effect of the Marquis's letter, and every circumſtance reſpecting a friend ſo dear to you. The ſame day that we received it, an expreſs arrived from the perſon Lauſan had employed to give information of his couſin: it acquainted him that the Marquis had been ſeized with a violent fever the day before; that its progreſs was ſo rapid, the phyſicians feared the worſt conſequences: he was in a high delirium when the letter came away. Your heart will inform you what our ſenſations were, on receiving the melancholy account. Lauſan ſet out immediately for Bruxelles, requeſting me to break the news to the Duke and Ducheſs, and, at the ſame time, to ſhew them his letter to you: it was a moſt painful undertaking; but never will I, my dear Couſin, ſpare my own feelings when friendſhip or gratitude claim a kind office of me. Apprehenſive that ſome other perſon might anticipate me, and not employ the neceſſary caution on the occa-

occaſion, I went directly to the Duke's hotel; I found their Graces at home, and alone, for they have avoided company as much as poſſible of late. My countenance prepared them for ſome melancholy intelligence; grief and agitation were, I believe, ſtrongly marked on it. They earneſtly inquired what was the matter, for that I looked ill and unhappy. The idea that I was about to give them ſo much wretchedneſs, overpowered the reſolution I thought I had ſummoned, and I burſt into tears. It was a ſeaſonable relief, and empowered me after to go through my taſk better than I could have expected. I told the Ducheſs, in anſwer to her tender inquiries of the cauſe of my uneaſineſs, that Lauſan had juſt been ſuddenly called to a diſtant part of the country, and the ſeparation, as we had ſo lately been reunited, had lowered my ſpirits. When I was ſomewhat recovered, I aſked the Duke if he had heard of the Marquis

lately;

lately; he anſwered, No! he thought I was well-informed, he never deſired to have his name mentioned—tears again filled my eyes; he thought I was hurt at his quickneſs, and apologized in the kindeſt manner. The Ducheſs regarded me with a penetrating look—I ſaid I had heard he was ill; but as the report had not reached them, it was perhaps untrue. I believe his Grace ſuppoſed this was a little pious fraud of mine, to ſoften his heart in his ſon's favour, as I had often interceded for him. He was not much moved, but the Ducheſs was all alarm. She was ſure I knew more than I had told—my agitation, Lauſan's ſudden departure, my introduction of the ſubject, my tears, all convinced her I had heard ſomething fatal of her child. His Grace then took the alarm—his countenance changed—in a faultering voice he aſked me, if I indeed had heard any certain intelligence of Charles; if I had, to tell him; he hoped he was prepared for the worſt. I

then

then ſaid, Lauſan had heard the Marquis was ill; and as he was ſo far diſtant from home and his friends, and might want the conſolation and care of friendſhip, had ſet out for Bruxelles, promiſing to ſend an expreſs if any danger was apprehended. The Duke and Ducheſs looked at each other with grief unutterable. His Grace firſt broke the melancholy ſilence; "Had we not better go to Bruxelles, my "Adelaide?" "I was about to propoſe "it," replied her Grace; "I will order "the carriage immediately." I begged their pardon for interfering, but ſaid, as there was no immediate danger, I thought they had better wait Lauſan's letter, which would give them timely information, if they had any thing to apprehend. His Grace ſeemed to approve this, and the Ducheſs coincided, though I knew ſhe could not bear the delay and ſuſpence. My reaſons for the advice was, as I apprehended, from the nature of the intelligence given us, that the Marquis's

illneſs

illneſs muſt be deciſive ere they reached Bruxelles. I was anxious that, in caſe the worſt ſhould happen, they ſhould be ſaved the wretched addition to their miſery, of finding him dead in a ſtrange land—every pang would be doubly felt from their ſeeing the place where he breathed his laſt: a thouſand aggravations to their ſorrow muſt be the conſequence of their viſiting the ſpot. It would alſo tend to impreſs the event indelibly on their hearts; and there they would find no conſoling friends to adminiſter the balm of comfort they would ſo greatly need. Theſe conſiderations influenced me to give the opinion they adopted. I thought it would give them relief, though it might ſoften them more to know the Marquis's contrition. I, therefore, mentioned your having heard from him, and that you had incloſed the letter, which I had brought for their peruſal. I hoped, and believed it would tend to alleviate their grief, by ſhewing him deſerving of

their

their affection, and truly penitent for the ſorrow he had cauſed them. The Duke eagerly aſked for the letter. I ſaw he was ſolicitous to peruſe it, as an excuſe for ſhewing all the tenderneſs and ſorrow that filled his ſoul for his child, which, while his conduct was unrepented of, he had not dared to do, though, it was evident, he felt only then for his ſufferings. When he had read it, tears guſhed from his eyes. Giving the letter to the Ducheſs, he ſaid, "Our child is again wor-"thy of our affection. Oh, gracious "Heaven!" raiſing his eyes, "take "him not from us when thus reſtored to "virtue, thus doubly endeared to us."—Turning to me—"Pardon this effuſion, "dear Madam; if ever you are a parent, "you will know how to allow for the "tenderneſs of a father ſo circumſtan-"ced." I was about to aſſure him his ſenſibility was a ſubject of additional reſpect in my eyes, when my attention was called off by the Ducheſs, who had faint-

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ed away. The oppoſite emotions of joy for her ſon's reſtoration to duty and affection, with her grief for his illneſs, operating on a heart long weakened by ſorrow, had been too much for her. We were greatly alarmed, but ſhe did not continue long in a ſtate of inſenſibility. On her recovery, the Duke adviſed her to retire to reſt, and try to compoſe her agitated ſpirits. I attended her to her apartment, and, by my ſympathy, ſoothed her to a greater tranquillity. Concluding the Duke would rather be left alone, I did not return to him, but retired to my own houſe, ſenſibly affected by the ſcene I had witneſſed. Knowing your heart ſo well as I do, dear Sir Henry, I am apprized what its ſuggeſtions will tend to; but let my entreaty prevail on you not to take any ſtep till you hear farther from me; at preſent, your coming over will be of no avail. If the Marquis is better, rely on having the earlieſt intelligence. I muſt repeat, that

I grieve to add to your ſorrows, as I perceive the extent of your ſufferings; but never, dear Sir Henry, reſtrain the emotions of your heart, or apologize for yielding to them to me. It is one of the offices of real friendſhip to liſten to the plaints of thoſe we intereſt ourſelves for. I am not ſo ſelfiſh as to deſire only the ſweets of ſocial intercourſe: if I could ward off the darts of misfortune from the boſom of thoſe I love, I would joyfully do it; but as I cannot, to pour the balm of conſolation into the wound is gratifying to me. I well know, that while we complain we are relieved: this diminiſhes my keen ſenſe of the ſufferings of thoſe who paint their woes to me—thence they ought to be reconciled to the communication of their ſorrows. Let it thus operate on your mind, my friend and couſin; relate all your ſentiments and feelings; while I know the avowal brings you comfort, it will have the ſame effect on me.

The Ducheſs has juſt ſent to inform me ſhe is reſolved to go to Bruxelles; the Duke cannot poſſibly accompany her. I ſhall immediately go and offer my ſervices to attend her. Happy, if in affording her any relief or aſſiſtance on ſuch a trying occaſion, I can evince my gratitude for her paſt kindneſs. You ſhall hear from me the moment I arrive at Bruxelles. Diſtribute proper remembrances for me, and believe me,

Dear Sir Henry,

Your's faithfully,

CLARA DE LAUSAN.

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Counteſs* DE LAUSAN.

Moubray Caſtle.

YOUR intelligence has, indeed, dear Clara, overwhelmed me with affliction; every ſelfiſh ſorrow is loſt in the conſideration of my friend's ſufferings. Well did you

you judge me! The firſt impulſe of my heart was to fly to Bruxelles, to ſee once more the companion of my youth, the friend of my heart, to pay him the attentions of affection, and perform the offices of kindneſs; but my mother's repreſentations, and earneſt requeſt that I would not, have detained me, unwillingly, believe me, for my ſoul knows no reſt, can taſte no comfort; my imagination perpetually ſuggeſts the moſt melancholy ideas; my fancy paints the ſcenes of horror; ſuſpence adds its inceſſant pangs; my ſufferings are indeſcribable. I am convinced I ſhould feel leſs were I on the ſpot. The diſtance, the uncertainty of receiving conſtant intelligence, as favourable winds can alone bring the news; theſe reflections rack my quiet. But kind and conſiderate as you are in deſiring me to unfold all my feelings and ſentiments, I will not now aggravate your ſufferings by dwelling on mine. The preſent ſcene may, alas! be too much for you.

you. Never, deareſt Clara, did your character appear in ſo amiable a point of view as your laſt letter preſented it in. Virtues as endearing as ſublime were diſplayed, in all you ſaid, in all you had done. The part you took in reſpect to the Beaumont family was conducted with as much judgement as kindneſs. Your generous arguments to induce a communication of my affliction, command my admiration and gratitude. As it is moſt true that the conduct we evince towards others directs theirs towards us, your reward will be ample in the eſteem and affection of thoſe you have ſo eſſentially ſerved (in neglect of every ſelfiſh conſideration) and in the reflections of an approving heart. Lady Moubray expreſſes the utmoſt fear, leſt the diſturbance of my mind ſhould injure my health. Miſs Melcombe, too, marks a concern that would ſoothe me moſt ſenſibly, did I not know I owe it to motives that deprive it of all its charms. Mere humanity, and, perhaps, ſome degree of friend-

friendſhip intereſts her; and ſhe evinces her ſympathy with ſuch a degree of tenderneſs, at times, as, were I not acquainted with her engagements, would miſlead, would, I fear, overpower all my fortitude. She reconciles this open avowal of her concern, I ſuppoſe, on the principle of her attachment to another being ſo well known to me, but yet, I muſt ſtill deem her conduct cruel: ſhe cannot be unconſcious to her influence; her tenderneſs therefore is adding pang to pang. Yeſterday morning as I entered the room, I heard your lovely friend ſupplicating my mother. As I opened the door my name was pronounced; I looked towards her; anxiety, tenderneſs, and agitation were ſtrongly impreſſed on her expreſſive countenance; ſhe bluſhed on my obſerving her attentive look. Lady Moubray ſaid, with a faint ſmile, I will grant your petition in part, my love, but we will talk it over ſome other time. Anxious as I was to know what petition that

I had any concern in could iſſue from the lips of Miſs Melcombe, as I found they deſired to preſerve it from my knowledge, I took no notice, but ſoon made a pretence for quitting the room, to give them an opportunity of purſuing what Miſs Melcombe ſeemed ſo intereſted in; but for the ſad ſituation of my amiable friend, the Marquis, I ſhould have dwelt much on this myſtery; but he engroſſes all my attention; my anxiety, and impatience to gain intelligence of him increaſe every hour. Truly kind, my dear Couſin, was your promiſe to write immediately on your arrival. My agitated mind admits not of farther communication. With the moſt friendly remembrance to Lauſan, and the moſt fervent wiſhes and prayers for the reſtoration of our dear Marquis, I conclude, dear Clara,

Your ſincere friend,

HENRY MOUBRAY.

JULIA DE ST. CLAIR *to* LOUISA DE RANCE'.

Abbaye de Ranée.

YOU will eaſily conceive the aggravation it has been to my ſorrow, deareſt Louiſa, to be diſappointed in the hope I had entertained of eſtabliſhing a communication between us, as that diſappointment was attended, too, by all the torments of apprehenſion and ſuſpenſe. My pacquet ſoon diſappeared; this, at the time, my heart hailed with the moſt joyful ſenſations as a propitious omen, but when no anſwer was returned, uneaſineſs, as powerful at that ſatisfaction had been, poſſeſſed my agitated mind: ſometimes I feared it had fallen into the Superior's hands; I watched her looks with trembling anxiety, but found no alteration in her conduct towards me, therefore judged ſhe had not diſcovered me: again I thought ſome of my companions might

have ſeen it; but they would either have reſtored it, or given me ſome hint about it; ſometimes I dreaded its having been blown down from the wall, though I thought I had ſecured it well: in fine, a thouſand fancies, fears, and anxious ideas oppreſſed me; one apprehenſion only that would have made me completely wretched did not occur, the unjuſt and grievous idea of your neglecting me. No, friend of my heart! I am as far from harbouring ſuſpicions as you from deſerving them; as ſoon could I accuſe myſelf as you. I have at length diſcovered the occaſion of the interruption, and will relate it before I proceed to more intereſting matters. From the hour I thought it likely I might have a reply to my laſt, I went, at every poſſible opportunity, to ſearch the place of our precious depoſit, in vain; every day I aroſe with hope, and every day brought diſappointment; my ſenſations were unutterable, yet I perſevered, though each time my pangs were keener:

keener; yeſterday I went, as uſual, when there was nobody but the gardener in the garden, and caſt a wiſhful look towards the place where I yet hoped to find a letter from my Louiſa. The gardener approached me, ſaying, "You ſeem to be "ſeeking ſomething, Miſs," (and looking very ſignificantly, added) "mayhap "I could help you to find it." Not ſuſpecting the truth, but apprehending my looks had betrayed me, I bluſhed, and heſitated what anſwer to make; he then told me, if I would promiſe to reward him, he would give me a letter he knew I was in ſearch of; I anſwered, that was out of my power at preſent, but I would give him my word to repay him amply whenever I had the means. "I can fur-"niſh them, then, Miſs, and hopes you "won't go for to forfeit your word." He then informed me, that the hares having done a great deal of damage in the garden, he had reſolved to prevent their coming in by ſtopping up the larger holes in the

wall; that in clearing the leaves from one he had found a box, which contained a letter without any direction; he had opened it, ſuſpecting ſome miſchief, and finding no harm was intended, *as it was addreſſed to me*, which he diſcovered by my name being mentioned in ſeveral parts of it, he had alſo opened the incloſed from the Marquis, which contained a bill (his Lordſhip had ſent from a miſtaken kindneſs); it was this bill which Blaize founded his hope of reward on. Never was I ſo perplexed for a while how to act, my dear Louiſa; determined not to accept ſuch ſervices from a lover, yet having no other means of rewarding Blaize, who would have been juſtified in doubting my veracity, whom I could not explain the matter to, I remained ſome minutes plunged in meditation; at length it occurred to me, that if I could ſend him to you with a letter, you would ſatisfy him, and I might return the Marquis his bill. Having ſettled this point with the concurrence of Blaize, I employed him firſt to

obtain

obtain pen, ink, and paper, and as we can ſecure his ſervices by paying for them, I think it will be better to truſt him with our future correſpondence. Were you rich, my beloved friend, believe me I would not ſcruple to receive pecuniary aſſiſtance on ſuch an occaſion at your hands, but your income barely ſuffices to anſwer the indiſpenſable claims on it; therefore, and as I have a brother who will, with joy, aſſiſt me, I refer you to him for the means of ſatisfying Blaize, and providing the means of correſpondence in future. My meſſenger will be impatient till he knows whether my part of the engagement will be fulfilled. I ſhall, therefore, now conclude this, my dear Louiſa; in a day or two I will ſend you a longer letter, and incloſe one for the Marquis. My health and ſpirits are better than when I laſt wrote, though I have ſuffered a ſevere ſtruggle. Adieu. Believe me, with the trueſt affection,

Your ſincere friend,

JULIA DE ST. CLAIR.

LOUISA DE RANCE' *to* JULIA DE ST. CLAIR.

Villars-Coteret.

NEVER did I feel more ſatisfaction than from thereceipt of your letter, my deareſt Julia. My apprehenſions on the ſubject of a diſcovery of our correſpondence had been greater than even your's; becauſe I knew all you would be expoſed to ſuffer from a detection, and I had a reaſon for judging it that you could not have; I muſt reſerve it for my next, as Monſ. Blaize is in a hurry to return. It was fortunate, though it has occaſioned us ſome alarm, that this diſcovery was made, as it opens a ſafe communication now: I have ſatisfied our meſſenger to his heart's content, and in relief to your generous ſcruples, will receive the amount of my donation from your brother, though you ſhould judge from your own heart, my loved Julia, whether I would not, with joy, have ſacrificed ſome of the ſuperfluities

perfluities of dreſs, to obtain the means of purchaſing the higheſt delight my nature is ſuſceptible of, the power of conſoling you; were I even ſelfiſh, I ſhould lay out my money to advantage in this inſtance, ſince it would procure me happineſs in our ſecret communings. Blaize is impatient, I muſt conclude. I ſend a ſmall quantity of paper, &c. for preſent ſupply, you ſhall have an ample ſtore ſoon, though ardently do I hope you will not long want it to employ ſecretly. Adieu. Believe me, my loved Julia, ever,

Moſt faithfully,

Your friend,

LOUISA DE RANCE'.

JULIA DE ST. CLAIR *to* LOUISA DE RANCE'.

Abbaye de Remi.

HOW ſenſibly do I feel at this moment, my dear Louiſa, the merciful kindneſs of that Being who never afflicts—and the neceſſity of chaſtening us, we muſt acknowledge, if we think aright, without beſtowing ſome conſolation, infuſing ſome cordial drop, that ſhall enable us to bear the bitterneſs of the portion. The renewal of our correſpondence, the relief it brings of empowering me to pour out my heart to the ſympathiſing boſom of a real friend, is a ſeaſonable reſource for my wounded feelings in the trial they have recently ſuffered. I have juſt concluded a letter of final diſmiſſion to the Marquis, my Louiſa; have ſealed that which excludes every hope of happineſs for ever; but duty,

duty, conſcience, gratitude, demanded the ſacrifice, and my conduct ſhall be the teſt of my ſincerity in my profeſſions to act up, as far as the frailty of human nature admits, to what is exacted of me in all my relations. I mentioned in my laſt that I had ſuffered a ſevere ſtruggle, it was in bringing my mind to this tone: I have ſucceeded, and my conſcience ſpeaks peace, though my heart mourns. Whence this reſolution was derived, I will now proceed to acquaint you, my dear Louiſa. Not long after I had written you my firſt long letter, I was informed my mother was come to ſee me; I flew with a motion, light as my heart, to throw myſelf at her feet, for I felt a pre-ſentiment that ſhe came from an impulſe of affection, her looks confirmed the ſweet idea; ſhe embraced me with tenderneſs, and told me ſhe came to reſtore me to her favour; that two circumſtances had tended to promote this: firſt, the favourable report of the Superior,

who highly commended the whole tenor of my conduct, from the time of my entrance in the convent; and next, the interceſſion of the Ducheſs de Beaumont. I bluſhed extremely at the mention of that name, and felt an univerſal agitation, pleaſure and ſurpriſe were, however, the moſt predominant of the ſenſations excited by the information.—My mother added, that her Grace had conceived ſo good an opinion of my heart, from my letter, notwithſtanding the imprudence of carrying on a ſecret correſpondence, as induced her to believe I ſhould be led by indulgence to reflect on my error, and reſolve to merit the lenity, and returning affection of my parent; ſhe, therefore, begg'd my mother would reſtore me to favour. "I comply with "her kind requeſt, my Julia," continued Madame de St. Clair, "and truſt "you will prove you merit her confi-"dence, and my tenderneſs." I fell at my mother's feet, and bathed her hands

with

with my tears; when my words found utterance I told her, it was not for me, who had acted ſo unworthily, to make profeſſions, but time ſhould evince my powerful and juſt ſenſe of her goodneſs, and the kind confidence of Madame de Beaumont, that there was no teſt they could put my ſincerity to, that I would not ſubmit to. My mother tenderly raiſed and embraced me, aſſuring me, the paſt ſhould be buried in eternal oblivion; ſhe hoped, however, I ſhould not be grieved at remaining ſome time longer in my preſent ſituation. If, I replied, ſhe deemed it right, though I ſhould deeply lament a ſeparation from her, yet to that, and every thing ſhe required, I would gladly ſubmit. Again ſhe embraced me, and ſaid, I might rely on her viſiting me as frequently as poſſible. She remained with me two hours, and evinced ſo much kindneſs in every word and look, that my heart reproached me in the ſevereſt manner for ever having

given her uneaſineſs. This, my Louiſa, is the occaſion of my reſolution to bid an eternal adieu to the Marquis, unleſs his attachment outlives the obſtacles to our union; for, you will readily believe the heart of your Julia incapable of ſuch baſeneſs, ſuch treachery, as to deceive thoſe who have ſo generouſly confided in her, who have acted with ſuch tenderneſs. The teſt I propoſed to my mother, I impoſed on myſelf. I will give up this object of my affection—forego the hope that has long cheered me, of paſſing a life of happineſs with a congenial being. Ah, Louiſa! Louiſa! did thoſe to whom I make this ſacrifice know how great it is, they would form a competent judgement of the effect their kindneſs has produced. My mother has frequently been to ſee me ſince, and is uniformly kind; I can now look up to her with confidence, and taſte the ſatisfaction ariſing from her parental affection unallayed, ſince I endeavour

deavour to become worthy of it. I am impatient to diſpatch the Marquis's letter, my dear Louiſa, that I may not have him recalled to my memory by the ſight of it. And now let me conjure you, my beloved friend, to aſſiſt in ſtrengthening my mind, ſupport my reſolution, aid my weakneſs; there are moments in which, ſpite of our earneſt deſire to act right, we feel the impulſes of the heart combating our intention, with a ſucceſs fatal to our peace, though it may not overpower our reſolution: aſſiſt me, therefore, dear Louiſa, in the ſtruggle; name not the Marquis to me, unleſs neceſſity compels you; I will employ every effort to baniſh him from my memory; I will ſeek the ſociety of my companions, will employ myſelf with my drawing, muſic, and books; every thing that reaſon recommends, as a means of conquering my unhappy attachment, I will make uſe of. You have excited my curioſity greatly, by

ſay-

ſaying you had a reaſon for judging our correſpondence was detected, inform me in your next what it was. I ſincerely thank you for your kind acquieſcence in my requeſt to apply to my brother, and feel all the generoſity of your argument to reconcile me to it. Was there a neceſſity for accepting your ſervice in this line, my dear Louiſa, I would ſacrifice every ſcruple to friendſhip; but you know there is not. Remember me affectionately to Louis; I ſhall hope to hear from him, tell him. I am ſure I need not urge your ſpeedy reply, by dwelling on the happineſs your letters beſtow. Your affection ever anticipates what is ſought by me as a means of ſatisfaction. Adieu. Believe me,

Moſt faithfully,

Your friend,

JULIA DE ST. CLAIR.

JULIA

JULIA DE ST. CLAIR *to the Marquis* DE BEAUMONT.

(Incloſed in the preceding.)

Abbaye de Remi.

FROM your knowledge of my ſituation, you will not be ſurprized, my Lord, that I did not receive your letter till within theſe few days. I will confeſs it ſoothed my wounded feelings, by the tenderneſs and ſympathetic concern marked in every paſſage; but as it thereby rendered a reſolution I have formed more difficult in the execution, has produced more ſorrow than ſatisfaction. This reſolution is, to attend to the ſuggeſtions of duty, in preference to the impulſe of my heart—to yield a correſpondence which I cannot purſue, without infringing the ſacred precepts of gratitude, and all that conſcience teaches us

to

to reſpect. The kind mediation of your mother, my Lord, and the affectionate conduct of mine, induced this reſolve. I have candidly acknowledged, that the recent proof of your tenderneſs has rendered this a trial to me; but judge not hence, that you can overpower my reſolution; it is becauſe I am ſure of my ground, that I made a confeſſion of what I ſhould have concealed, but for the conviction that my gratitude, for the tenderneſs ſhewn me, would enable me to overcome all that oppoſes the proof of it. I return your bill, my Lord. I am obliged by the motive that influenced your offer of it, and the arguments you employ to reconcile me to acceptance. As the communication of this letter will ſhew the neceſſity of its return, I need not cite my opinions; wherefore, independent of them, I could not have received ſuch an obligation at your hands, ſhould your attachment outlive the obſtacles that oppoſe it; and I am empowered, with the

con-

conſent of thoſe to whom we owe obedience, to receive your addreſſes: I ſhall prove that a ſenſe of duty, and not inſenſibility to your merits or tenderneſs, has urged me to deſire our preſent correſpondence may ceaſe. I will hope, my Lord, I have ſo far proved myſelf worthy of your regard, as to engage your attention to my requeſt—that you will not addreſs me again till authorized to do ſo, by the concurrence of our friends. It will be uſeleſs and unkind; for though it may tend to ſoften my heart, it will never accompliſh the point of inducing a change of reſolution. Adieu, my Lord. While you continue to wiſh to merit it, believe you will be tenderly cheriſhed in the remembrance, ever be the ſubject of the moſt fervent good wiſhes, and prayers of,

Your faithful

JULIA DE ST. CLAIR.

LOUISA

LOUISA DE RANCE' *to* JULIA DE ST. CLAIR.

Villars-Coteret.

WERE it poſſible, deareſt Julia, that my eſteem for you could be augmented, your laſt letter would have accompliſhed that point; but I have ſo long known you capable of every thing great and good, that my regard cannot receive an addition. *I will* comply with your requeſt, *I will* aid your reſolutions by all the means you enjoin, and may that Being who views your virtues, ſupport you in every trial, and reſtore tranquillity to your diſquieted mind. The circumſtance you requeſt me to inform you of, I now proceed to relate, and ſincerely hope it will tend to amuſe you. I own to you, grieved and vexed as I was at the proof that our correſpondence was diſcovered, and apprehenſive of the conſequences, I could

could not ſuppreſs a laugh at the clumſy trick which afforded that proof. It was not till I received your letter, and found thence the Marquis had ſent a bill, that I could conceive the occaſion of the ridiculous anſwer you will peruſe. The particulars are theſe: I went, when I had a hope you might have replied to my letter, to ſearch the wall, and found my box there: at firſt, I feared you might not have had an opportunity to take it away; but, on opening the box, that fear ſoon gave way to another, when I ſaw a letter in a different hand-writing. Eager as I was to learn the cauſe, I thought it right to repreſs my anxiety till I arrived at home, leſt an obſervation of my reading there ſhould have awakened ſuſpicion; but never was ſurprize equal to mine when I read the letters, (which I incloſe for your diverſion). You will conceive that I was immediately conſcious to a trick, but by whom I could not ſuppoſe. Finding, however, that my

letters

letters were intercepted, I thought it adviſeable not to truſt any more there. I felt ſeverely for the anxiety and uneaſineſs you muſt ſuffer—my own, I aſſure you, were little inferior. I think you will laugh now, my dear Julia, at the cauſe of our uneaſineſs. I hope you won't repine at the great inferiority of your own ſtile to that of your *elegant amanuenſis*. Whenever you wiſh to write a ſuperlatively fine letter, I doubt not Blaize's pen will be at your ſervice. He was apprehenſive, at firſt, that I might withhold his reward, in conſequence of his counterfeit; but I ſoon relieved that fear, and ſtopt him when he would have excuſed the tranſaction. I plainly perceive that he has calculated very accurately what plan would beſt promote his intereſt. Had he betrayed us, the bill muſt have been given up, and perhaps a crown thought a handſome reward; therefore, it would not anſwer to diſcloſe the ſecret; hence he deviſed that ingenious ſcheme

of

of ſubſtituting an anſwer, calculated, as he preſumed, to draw more money from the ſame ſource. Foiled in this, and hoping, it is evident, to gain a greater and more laſting ſupply by aiding us, he was influenced to avow himſelf. The folly that conſtantly attends cunning, is a happy antidote to its dangerous aſſaults. Intereſt being the tie that binds Monſieur Blaize to our ſervice, we ſhall ſecure his fidelity. I have not ſeen your brother lately, though the walk from the Caſtle is ſo ſhort. There is another cauſe for this, my dear Julia, beſides the watch that is ſet on him at home. His attention is wholly engroſſed by your ſiſter's pretty gay friend, Madame Nivelon. The aſtoniſhing improvement in his perſon and manners, within theſe few months, have ſtruck her fancy ſo much, that ſhe ſpread all her lures to get the handſome Cadet enliſted among her admirers. She ſucceeded, and poor Louis is ſo faſcinated, that I find he can nei-

ther eat, drink, or ſleep, for thinking of her. Every moment he can make his own he devotes to her. This, as you will imagine, excites much obſervation in the village; but ſhe has ſo often been the ſubject of this ſort of animadverſion, that the voice of cenſure will ſoon be ſilent, and ſeek ſome newer theme. She thinks it a triumph. Your mother has not yet heard it, I ſuppoſe, as ſhe lives ſo ſecluded; but whenever the report reaches the Caſtle, I fancy her injunctions will be laid on both her ſon and daughter, to be leſs frequent in their viſits. Should Louis's attachment interrupt his attentions to you, my dear Julia, do not be grieved at it; recollect the impetuoſity of young boys of his age; a little time will reſtore him to you and himſelf. The power of a coquette, and an unprincipled woman, are ſo great while they laſt, that they ſubdue almoſt every principle in the heart of their victim; but very ſhort-lived, in general, is this influence.

Rea-

Reaſon, or the developement of their arts, deprives them of their ill-founded power. Your ſiſter takes great pains to recommend herſelf to Louis, but I truſt, and hope, ſhe will never ſupercede you in his affections. The confidence you ſo ſweetly expreſs of my writing to you as frequently as poſſible, I will prove, my Julia, is not ill-founded. Happy am I that I have it in my power to conſole you—to prove, by employing the few attentions within my ability, how ſincere I am in profeſſing myſelf,

Deareſt Julia,

Your affectionate friend,

LOUISA DE RANCE'.

(Incloſed in the preceding.)

OUR old womun and the yung fri watches me ſo, that I can't get hopper-tunyti to anſer yu as I deſires; give this

that I ſends, to you no's who, and no me for yur loving frind.

JULIE.

THIS cums to tell yu, my dear lovier, that yur letter cum'd ſafe to hand; my hart ſkip'd for joy to ſee yu had'nt furgat me, poore priſner as I be; I ſees yu loves me by wat yu ſent, and by yur deſiring me to give ſum muny to ſarvants to make them behav wel to me; I hav giv'n it all away—only wat I baut pens and paper with, to be ſure I ſhud be ſory to rob yu, but wen you can ſpare ſum more, I wants many things uſeful: I hav got a fore hand, ſo got a gude frend to write for me; don't be vext leſt I ſhud'nt love yu, I loves yu to my hart and ſole, becauſ yu are ſo gude to me; pray rite agane verry ſune—No more at preſent from yur true lovier.

JULIE.

The Counteſs DE LAUSAN *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Bruxelles.

I PERFORM my promiſe of writing immediately on my arrival at Bruxelles, dear Sir Henry, though my letter muſt be confined to a few lines, for I am greatly fatigued, as we have not reſted above three hours during our journey, and that merely to take a little refreſhment, at different periods. The Ducheſs's anxiety was ſo great, that I am convinced ſhe would not have ſlept, had I prevailed on her to go to bed; I, therefore, did not preſs the point. When we arrived at the laſt ſtage, I contrived to diſpatch a courier privately to Lauſan, that, in caſe of any unhappy circumſtance having taken place, he might be prepared. It was, I am rejoiced to ſay, not requiſite on that ſcore—the Ducheſs had not that dread-

ful blow to ſuſtain. We found the Marquis better, though ſtill dreadfully ill. I muſt break off—I am overpowered with fatigue. Lauſan would write, but he never quits the bedſide of his couſin. Adieu, dear Sir Henry, rely on having early and conſtant intelligence on a ſubject you are ſo much intereſted in. Lauſan's beſt remembrance is added to the kind wiſhes of

Your friend and couſin,

CLARA DE LAUSAN.

Madame DE LAUSAN *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Bruxelles.

IT is a moſt painful trial to me, dear Sir Henry, to convey intelligence that will affect you; but I feel it right to prepare you for the worſt. The fever has

has increaſed ſo violently this morning, that, unleſs ſome means can be found to ſtop its progreſs, the worſt conſequences are apprehended. The Marquis is in a high delirium—raves of Victoria, the Duke and Ducheſs, often mentions you, and implores forgiveneſs for his raſhneſs. The Ducheſs's grief admits not deſcription. Lauſan looks almoſt as ill as the poor Marquis, with fatigue and anxiety; never was a more wretched family, all our hope is in the ſkill of the phyſician, he is extremely clever, and has had much experience. I muſt conclude, as I wiſh to devote all the time poſſible to Madame de Beaumont. I write alſo for her to the Duke daily, as her nerves are ſo ſhook ſhe cannot form a letter. I will write immediately that any change takes place. With proper remembrances, believe me,

Dear Sir Henry,

Your faithful friend,

CLARA DE LAUSAN.

The Count DE LAUSAN *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Bruxelles.

THE firſt occaſion I have had to exert my authority as a huſband I have juſt met; I have inſiſted on your amiable couſin's not writing to you, as ſhe was earneſt to do, my dear Sir, becauſe ſhe has given you ſo much uneaſineſs of late, from her communications, that ſhe wiſhed to make up for it, by conveying the pleaſing intelligence of the Marquis's being better. If he continues to improve as much as he has done in the laſt twelve hours, Dr. Hemilbaur, ſays there will ſoon be no doubt of his recovery. This change having produced ſome tranquillity to all our hearts, I have taken advantage of it, to prevail on the Ducheſs to take ſome reſt. With your Couſin, as I obſerved, I was obliged to plead my authority, ere I could

I could engage compliance, and cannot now boaſt that my victory was ſo complete as *ſome* would think it *ought* to be. I did not obtain unconditional ſubmiſſion —was forced to agree to terms; however, I endeavour to reconcile this condeſcenſion, by the idea of the terms being pleaſant: that I ſhould write to you was the condition on which my Clara yielded the pen, and agreed to take ſome reſt, which ſhe ſadly wants, as ſhe has devoted her whole attention to the Ducheſs and the Marquis. She herſelf prepared and gave him every thing preſcribed, taking on herſelf the entire office of nurſe. She ſaid a friend ſhould perform that part, as ſo much of the comfort of the patient depended on the tenderneſs and care it required. Could ſhe have been more endeared to me than ſhe was, the ſeeing her act this part of a miniſtering angel, to relieve the afflicted, to conſole the wounded in ſpirit, would have completed her conqueſt of my

heart's fulleſt eſteem, and tendereſt affection—never was man more happy in a wife: ſhe is an affectionate and agreeable companion, and a ſenſible friend. The attention ſhe pays to domeſtic arrangements, mark elegance and conſiſtency, without infringing œconomy—reſpected by her acquaintance, and beloved in her family: in whatever character I conſider her, ſhe commands my higheſt approbation. The Ducheſs is ſo ſenſibly touched by her attentions, that I am perſuaded ſhe is almoſt as dear to her as to the Marquis. Have you never obſerved, my dear Sir, that huſbands, who are violently ſuſpected of being under female dominion, take care to deify their wives, as a ſort of apology for their ſubmiſſion. I fancy you will be apt to ſuſpect me of this, when I acknowledge that I yielded to yet another injunction of my wife's, before I could obtain her conſent to my requeſt; it was, that as ſoon as I had written you a few lines, I

ſhould

ſhould lay down on the ſofa, which is beſide the Marquis's bed: as I fear, were I to break my word altogether, ſhe would plead my example in future, I muſt comply. Depend on hearing again ſoon, and believe me, with the trueſt eſteem,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged friend,

and obedient humble ſervant,

FRANÇOIS DE LAUSAN.

P. S. My beſt reſpects attend Lady Moubray and Miſs Melcombe.

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Counteſs* DE LAUSAN.

Moubray Caſtle.

THE very elements ſeem to have conſpired to augment the wretchedneſs of your Couſin, my dear Clara; adverſe winds and the roughеſt ſeas that are remembered between Oſtend and Dover,

prevented the arrival of your letters. They all came together. Judge my anxiety, my ſuſpenſe; they became intolerable. I had reſolved to go over the day I received your pacquets; Lady Moubray was ſo alarmed at my ſtate of mind, that ſhe became reconciled to my going. My preparations were began, but happily became unneceſſary. The Count's letter has cheered me extremely; I ardently hope the favourable ſymptoms will continue. How amiable has been your conduct on this occaſion, my dear Couſin; the pen of a huſband has traced your eulogy; this, I am ſure, will be more delightful to you than to be celebrated by the firſt wits of Paris: as you have the judgement to prefer the eſteem which will gild your proſpect throughout, will cheer the evening of your days, to that ſplendor of applauſe which, like a meteor, blazes with a deſtructive fire for ſome time, and then is no longer ſeen. I hope you will not ſuffer, my dear Couſin, for

your

your amiable attentions; I own I have a pride and pleaſure in reflecting, that the characters of my fair countrywomen will be known and exalted in the eyes of our rival nation, by the conduct of my friend and relative; that it will appear how ſweetly they can blend the endearing, the intereſting, and the uſeful, with the agreeable and elegant characteriſtics. Lauſan's letter has rendered us more proud than ever we were of our amiable relation. The happy intelligence of the proſpect of Beaumont's recovery has given me a temporary flow of ſpirits, but there is nevertheleſs much grief in my heart, and I will confeſs, that though truly conſcious to my folly, I cannot help ſometimes indulging the ſweet viſits of hope. The tenderneſs that forms ſo conſpicuous a part of Miſs Melcombe's character, leads her to evince ſo much ſympathy towards me, that my imagination, too ready to admit what ſoothes me, miſleads me with the idea that ſhe is intereſted, as I wiſh her to be:

but reaſon ſoon diſperſes the illuſion. Lady Moubray, when I declared the impoſſibility of my ſupporting ſuſpenſe longer, and my conſequent deſign to go to Bruxelles, told me ſhe wiſhed, previous to my departure, to have an hour's converſation with me on a ſubject of much import to me: my time was at her diſpoſal, I replied; ſhe named the evening, in that interval your letters arrived, when I applied to know her commands; ſhe ſaid it was no longer of conſequence, as my journey was delayed. It is very improbable that her intended communication ſhould allude to the ſubject I am moſt deeply concerned in, yet in my ſtate of mind every circumſtance becomes an object of hope or fear. Fancy converts every event into a matter of intereſt in relation to what is neareſt my heart. Your account of the Marquis's remembrance of me under ſuch influences as deprived him even of reaſon, affected me ſenſibly, aſſure him—when able to converſe—of my tender

der remembrances and fervent good wiſhes that I will ſoon come and congratulate him on, I hope, his perfect recovery. Tell Lauſan he has my heart's beſt thanks for his letter, which I will ſoon anſwer, in the mean time I recommend to him, earneſtly to keep up his authority as a huſband. *It's very true, Clara*—for I am convinced it will ever be employed to promote the happineſs of his wife. Adieu, my dear Couſin. Believe me

Your faithful friend,

HENRY MOUBRAY.

The Counteſs DE LAUSAN *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Bruxelles.

I Remember your gallant preference of our ſex, as correſpondents, too well, my good Couſin, not to ſuppoſe you will be prodigiouſly pleaſed to find my agree-

able ſcrawls reſtored to you. You men, in general, attend ſo minutely to mere matter of fact, that your letters are thereby deprived of the charm derived from our lively meanderings, and pleaſant abſurdities; you will, perhaps, ſay, I ought not to reprobate *the matter of fact ſtile* adopted by the men, ſince, in a recent inſtance, it was ſo favourable to me; but though *I* ſhould, on this occaſion, be bribed to approve it, I fancy moſt other women would deem it a ſhocking proof of the juſtneſs of the charge—a huſband to praiſe his wife; the moſt ſtupid of all abſurdities! You will naturally deduce from my livelineſs the certainty that your friend is much better; he is not only out of danger, but recovering faſt: my ſpirits are too high raiſed on the occaſion to admit of my giving a deſcription of the affecting ſcene that paſſed between him and the Ducheſs, when he recovered his reaſon, and learnt how much ſhe had ſuffered for him, how tenderly ſhe had watched

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ed over him. I have had ſo much of gloom and grief lately, that I am glad to relax a little. One of the firſt *advantages* you will derive from my recovered ſpirits is a *good ſcolding*—pleaſe to obſerve, that good is a very appropriate epithet, as I have employed it; though *ſome* might criticiſe, and *you* may differ, I hope the ſcolding will produce reformation, and then I ſhall ſay, "*bon cela.*" You ſome time ago made an apology for egotiſm in your communings with me. I was very much diſpoſed to liſten to the ſuggeſtions of *Anger*; I could not, however, indulge them, as ſorrow then claimed *precedence* in my heart; but I ſaid, wait *friend*, you ſhall be attended to in time; that time is now arrived, and I fulfil my promiſe. But, bleſs me! where is my *inſtigator* gone? I declare the teſty gentleman walked off in a huff, becauſe I did not give him audience immediately. Well, as ſome notice, however, is due to your *unfriendly* apology, I'll threaten, though I don't

don't ſcold, aſſuring you, if ever you utter ſuch an expreſſion in future, in return, I will copy a letter out of ſome book, no matter what the ſubject, to ſend as an anſwer; for, if we are not to write on what is moſt intereſting, the ſentiments of others may be as entertaining as our own. There, now I forgive you.—Though Bruxelles can certainly lay claim to many beauties, the *Allée vert*, *Park*, &c. yet I am afraid a prejudice will govern me to the diſlike of it all my life; we are ſo apt to admire or diſapprove every place according to what our feelings were in it; if happy, oh! it is the moſt beautiful, charming, delightful ſpot! If unhappy, it is the moſt gloomy, diſagreeable, horrid place in the univerſe! A circumſtance reſpecting the Marquis has ſtrongly excited my obſervation, and, I own, my curioſity. His calling perpetually on the name of Victoria, in his delirium, as I recollect that Julia was the ſignature of Mademoiſelle de St. Clair; this ſeems to carry a myſtery with it that

puzzles

puzzles my poor brain extremely; to be ſure people often, in theſe ſituations, call on thoſe they are indifferent about, but he ſcarcely named any body but thoſe who were moſt dear to him, and this name was almoſt continually on his lips. I have not noticed this to the Ducheſs, for fear of doing miſchief, though I don't know how, and ſhe did not herſelf remark in it. What ſtrengthens my idea of ſome myſtery is, that among the letters addreſſed to him, there are two in different female hands. I don't know what to make of all this; your having diſapproved his conduct too: I hope, however, there is nothing derogatory to his principles in this buſineſs; I feel ſo much intereſted for him, now, that it would grieve me moſt ſenſibly to find him guilty of a diſhonourable act; but time, our friend and foe, will clear up all our myſteries, ſo reſolve on the ſtrength of this ſage obſervation to ſympathize with me in deducing comfort and patience from it. We ſhall ſet out

for

for Paris as ſoon as the Marquis is able to bear the journey, you had better therefore addreſs your letters there. We have been told an anecdote of our worthy phyſician, that affords a ſtriking proof of the abſurdity of accuſtoming ourſelves to the continual uſe of any particular expreſſion. It occurred to me as I was ringing the changes on the word good, and I reſolve to relate it; it will account for my quotation of the expreſſion, *bon cela*. You have, no doubt, heard of the melancholy circumſtance of a former miniſter of our's here, Sir W. G—— blinding the Duke D'Aremberg by an unlucky ſhot when they were in purſuit of ſome game. Hemilbaur, who had been an army-ſurgeon, was called in; he inquired of the Duke if he was in pain —Yes, very great.—*Pon cela*, anſwered Hemilbaur in his German French.—The next queſtion was, Can your Highneſs ſee at all?—Not at all—*Pon cela*. In ſhort, to the Duke's account of his ſufferings, and the melancholy aſſurance that there was

no hope of his ever recovering his ſight, Hemilbaur invariably applied his mal-à-propos anſwer of *pon cela*. When I inform you that I am really now bringing my hurried epiſtle to a cloſe, I fancy you will be tempted to ſay *pon cela* with more meaning than poor Hemilbaur, attached to his favourite ſentence. Adieu, dear Sir Henry. I need not particularize the kind wiſhes that are wafted with this from the houſehold here to the inhabitants of *Moubray Caſtle*. You will not ſuſpect me of the prejudice I have alluded to above, I hope, when I declare, I ſtill think *that* the moſt delightful place I have ever ſeen. Believe me,

Dear Couſin, ſincerely,
Your friend, &c.
CLARA DE LAUSAN.

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR *to the Marquis* DE BEAUMONT.

Villars-Coteret.

I WAS about to addreſs you, to account for my long ſilence, and queſtion you reſpecting your's, dear Marquis, when I accidentally heard that you were dangerouſly ill at Bruxelles; every idea but that one inſtantly was baniſhed from my memory. What my heart has ſuffered ever ſince, I muſt refer you to your's to inform you; no language can expreſs it. Sometimes I flatter myſelf report may have performed its uſual office of exaggerating; then again I fear, from your not writing, that it is too true. What confirms this diſtreſſing idea is, that I find the Ducheſs is with you at Bruxelles. Louis, who gave me this information, is extremely wretched on the occaſion; he would have ſet out immediately, but I perſuaded him, as your family were there, it would be

be better not. I was ſure, too, that as ſoon as you were able, you would let us have the earlieſt intelligence, though I did not tell him ſo. Tormented by the keen pangs of ſorrow, uncertainty, and ſuſpenſe, I ſcarce know what I ſay; not a moment's peace will my boſom know till I hear from you. If you cannot write yourſelf, my Lord, let Dubois give me three lines juſt to ſpecify the ſtate of your health—we can depend upon him—my mind is too much agitated to write more—my moſt ardent good wiſhes are with you. Believe me

Your faithful, but unhappy,

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to* VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR.

Bruxelles.

THE very firſt moment that pen and ink could be obtained, I have employed it,

it, though contrary to the ordinances of my phyſician, to addreſs my beloved Victoria. I have, indeed, been very ill, ſo ill, that long was I in the dreadful balance between life and death. The cauſe of this I will communicate at large when I am more capable of writing; for the preſent I muſt confine myſelf to the information that a ſtruggle between affection and duty, my fear of loſing you, and the agitation I have long ſuffered, ſo deeply affected my mind, that my frame could not ſupport it. I was on the point of writing a letter to you, which I feared would deſtroy my every hope of happineſs, when I was ſeized with a ſhivering fit, the forerunner of a fever, that deprived me of my ſenſes, and my friends, for ſome time, of every hope of my recovery. I find ſo much difficulty in tracing theſe lines, and it occaſions ſuch giddineſs in my head, from my extreme weakneſs, that I muſt deſiſt as ſoon as I have informed you, that I ſet out for Paris, as

ſoon

ſoon as I am able to bear the fatigue; you ſhall know the cauſe of this immediately that I am able to write. Adieu, deareſt Victoria. Believe me as tenderly as ever,

Your devoted,

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR *to the Marquis* DE BEAUMONT.

Villars-Coteret.

VARIOUS and painful are the ſenſations produced by your letter, my Lord; grief, ſurpriſe, and ſuſpenſe, agitate my heart; to know that I have been ſo near loſing him on whom all my happineſs depends, ſhook me extremely, and I dread leſt a relapſe, or the fatigue of your journey, ſhould again throw you into ſuch danger; for Heaven's ſake! let me hear from you immediately on

your

your arrival at Paris. You have aſtoniſhed and perplexed me by ſaying that you were on the point of writing me a letter, which, you feared, would have deſtroyed your every hope of happineſs; that the ſtruggle between affection and duty, and the fear of loſing me, had occaſioned your illneſs: ſure, from this I am to preſume you meant to give me up, my Lord; my pride, my affections, are wounded by the ſuppoſition; but, as to duty you made the ſacrifice; as you have ſuffered ſo ſeverely from the idea, I am ſatisfied. Were I not thus aſſured by ſuch powerful, though painful proofs, that your regard for me is as great as ever, I ſhould certainly withhold the intelligence I am about to communicate, as a circumſtance you had no longer any intereſt in; but as you tell me, my Lord, you are as tenderly devoted to me as ever, I conceive the information will pleaſe you, that my uncle, the Baron de Vernieul is himſelf returned to Nor-

mandy. The ſame poſt which brought me your letter, conveyed this intelligence; he wrote to my mother a kind but melancholy letter, expreſſive of his ſorrow for his unkind treatment of his brother, which, he owned, was owing to the deteſtable paſſion of avarice, that had abſorbed every good property, every affectionate propenſity in his nature; it had influenced him not only to refuſe a ſmall ſum to promote a brother's intereſts and eſtabliſh him, but had been the occaſion of his going to India, that he might increaſe his property and leave an immenſe fortune to his children; he had mortgaged his lands to proſecute this plan, and had given out that they were ſold, to prevent an idea of his returning, as this he hoped would deter his brother from ſeeking him; for fear, however, that he ſhould be traced, and to remove the bar to his entering into a mercantile line—you know the prejudices of nobleſſe on this ſcore, my Lord, he changed

ged his name. In the plan which had induced this conduct, he ſucceeded to his utmoſt wiſhes; for he gained immenſe poſſeſſions, but the end for which he had purſued them was loſt. His whole family had been ſwept off, and himſelf had been on the brink of the grave; theſe deep misfortunes had enforced reflection; he ſaw himſelf left a forlorn being, without a creature who took an intereſt in his feeling, or cared what his ſufferings or his fate were—he found riches would not purchaſe ſympathy, affection, and thoſe feelings which in the hour of ſorrow ſuſtain and conſole us; had he died, the purpoſe for which he had given up every tender tie, and every good principle, would have been defeated—inſtead of aggrandizing his family, his property, from the change of his name, would have been divided among ſtrangers: thus was he taught to feel the crime he had been guilty of; he acknowledged the

mercy

mercy of that Being, who, by misfortune, had taught him repentance, he was now awakened to a complete ſenſe of his error, and reſolved to evince his ſincerity by making every atonement in his power; for this purpoſe, he ſhould, during his life, make an ample proviſion for his brother's children, and leave the reſidue of his fortune to them at his death. If he obtained by this repentance my mother's forgiveneſs, he would immediately ſet out on his journey to ſee us, and, if we had no objection, ſhould wiſh to paſs the remainder of his days among us. This is the ſummary of his letter. You will conceive the ſatisfaction it, on every account, (ſave that of my poor uncle's ſufferings) conveyed to us. Not only is the obſtacle removed that oppoſed our union, but I have the pleaſure to know I ſhall not come deſtitute to you, though not ſuch an object as you might have looked to: my affection, and attention to promote your

happineſs, will, however, I hope, recompenſe you, and reconcile your family to your choice. My good mother is all happineſs; ſhe ſaid, this morning, ſhe now hoped an union might be practicable between the Beaumont family and our's; (ſhe little thought the parties who would compoſe it) that ſhe ſhould fetch Julia from the Convent; it would rejoice her to recompenſe her poor girl for her ſufferings; and ſhe knew not a young man, whom, independently of his rank, ſhe ſhould ſo much wiſh as a huſband to a daughter of her's. She is the more impatient to get Julia here, that my uncle may not be acquainted with the cauſe of her confinement. It makes me ſo extremely unhappy, my Lord, that, from the preſent ſtate of circumſtances, we cannot avow our attachment, without expoſing my ſiſter, and that publicly, that I have deviſed a thouſand ſchemes for avoiding it; ſurely the puniſhment of ſeeing all her hopes fruſtrated, and herſelf betray-

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ed to you, will be ſufficient puniſhment; yet, without acquainting my mother with her conduct, a public expoſure is unavoidable. I have thought, my dear Marquis, you would be the propereſt perſon to acquaint my mother with your diſcovery of her perfidy: you need not mention how long you have known it, or by what means you became acquainted with it; becauſe, as ſhe is very preciſe, you know, ſhe might condemn your deceiving Julia, though a fair retort. As you will enforce the neceſſity of ſecrecy, for the family's ſake, ſhe will readily ſee the propriety of it, and either ſend Julia back to the Convent, or into Normandy.—If you approve this, and you find the Duke and Ducheſs no longer averſe to our alliance, I think you had better expedite your journey here, and immediately inform my mother of your diſcovery, as if now made through a friend of D'Aubigné's. This is the outline of the plan I have formed to ſave Julia as much as

poſſible from diſgrace, my Lord. When I ſee you, I will communicate farther particulars. Your ſtate of health makes me very impatient to hear from you; but I need not urge you to write; you will judge from your own feelings what mine muſt be on a ſimilar occaſion, and will thence give the earlieſt information poſſible of an event ſo eſſential to my happineſs. Adieu. Accept my moſt ardent good wiſhes for your complete recovery, and believe me,

My Lord,
Your faithful
VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR.

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Counteſs* DE LAUSAN.

Moubray Caſtle.

YOUR lively epiſtle, dear Clara, gave me infinite ſatisfaction, from both the occa-

occaſion and conſequence, the Marquis's recovery, your cheerfulneſs, and the pleaſant contents of your letter. I have heard that your ſex are very much addicted to indulge their propenſity to curioſity: if this is juſt—though I will not allow it to be confined to the female breaſt—I cannot oblige you more, than by owning you have gueſſed aright, in uppoſing the Marquis's conduct involves a myſtery. I am ſorry I cannot explain it, for your farther ſatisfaction; but you will, I am ſure, think my ſecrecy being engaged, a ſufficient cauſe that I do not unfold it. In reſpect to the impeachment of his principles I know not what to ſay: with nine-tenths of the world he will not only ſtand excuſed, but be applauded. The nicer few will condemn him; however, his repentance, his ſufferings, his atonement, will, I hope and truſt, clear him entirely. The Marquis's happy recovery having removed that ſubject of anxiety which drew my attention

from the contemplation of my peculiar griefs—I now feel them return, with redoubled power; but I will not diſturb that ſerenity of mind ſo lately reſtored to you, by a diſplay of feelings which will excite your ſympathy too pointedly; but as I cannot long reſt on any other ſubject, I muſt contract my letter. Lady Moubray informs me ſhe and Miſs Melcombe intend going up to town ſoon, and requeſted me to accompany her. I would moſt gladly have been excuſed, as I have reaſon to think the journey is made for the purpoſe of preparations for Miſs Melcombe's marriage; but my mother made a point of my compliance, and you know, my dear Clara, I think myſelf bound to pleaſe her to the utmoſt extent of my power. How can I repay her unremitted attention and care evinced towards me through my life? Or how expect that, ſhould I ever have children, they will be affectionate and obedient to me, if I neglect her? There are a few

points

points I cannot yield—I cannot marry to please her alone—nor could I, for any consideration on earth, see Elwina married, or even ſtay in England at the time I knew ſhe was torn for ever from me—beſtowed on one who will never know her value.—Oh, Elwina! never will you know how you were appretiated by one heart—that heart now ſickens at the idea of for ever loſing you. Adieu, adieu, dear Clara—I can write no more.

Your ſincere friend,

HENRY MOUBRAY.

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Marquis* DE BEAUMONT.

Moubray Caſtle.

THE melancholy diſpoſition of my mind renders writing ſo irkſome to me, that nothing but the deſire of congratulating you, my dear Marquis, on your

recovery, could give me reſolution to take up my pen. So ſtrongly did my heart enter into your ſufferings, that, while they laſted, they ſuperceded all ſenſe of my own. The reſtoration of your health has given me back my own ſorrows; and I own to you, there are times in which I find them almoſt inſupportable. Were they not ſo extenſive as to render my whole future life a cheerleſs blank, I truſt I ſhould meet my afflictions with more fortitude; but, alas! Beaumont, not only muſt I bear the idea that Elwina cannot be mine, I have the miſery, the unſpeakable miſery, to know ſhe will become the wife of another—of a coxcomb, whom ſhe muſt deſpiſe, and whoſe rank and fortune can be her only object; ſhe, who ever deſcribed a life of domeſtic happineſs with a congenial mind, ſo ſweetly, ſo forcibly. But, I believe, her real ſentiments lead to a preference of this plan; the whole tenor of her conduct proves it. Only three days

ſince,

ſince, when we were ſitting together, ſhe took up Cowper's poems, and ſelecting the following beautiful paſſage, recited it with an energy and tenderneſs that moved her even to tears:

"Domeſtic Happineſs, thou only bliſs
Of Paradiſe that has ſurviv'd the fall!
Tho' few now taſte thee unimpair'd and pure,
Or taſting, long enjoy thee---too infirm,
Or too incautious to preſerve thy ſweets
Unmixt with drops of bitter, which neglect,
Or temper, ſheds into thy chryſtal cup.
Thou art the nurſe of Virtue---In thine arms
She ſmiles, appearing, as in truth ſhe is,
Heav'n-born, and deſtin'd to the ſkies again.
Thou art not known where Pleaſure is ador'd,
That reeling goddeſs with the zoneleſs waiſt
And wand'ring eyes, ſtill leaning on the arm
Of Novelty---her fickle, frail ſupport;
For thou art meek and conſtant, hating change,
And finding, in the calm of truth-tried love,
Joys that her ſtormy raptures never yield."

Vol. II. page 92.

Scarcely could I command myſelf ſo far as to refrain from taxing her with incon-

ſiſtency; but had I ſpoken—I knew not whither my feelings might lead me; I might have avowed my tenderneſs: I was ſilent; though, truly may I ſay it, "it was pain and grief to me." I looked at her, however, in a manner that muſt have conveyed a reproach to her; yet, perhaps, I am unjuſt to her, Beaumont---ſhe may have yielded to Lady Moubray's ſolicitations---may have ſacrificed herſelf to her delicate apprehenſions, that my mother's deſire for her eſtabliſhment aroſe from fears on my account. Perhaps ſhe ſecretly prefers me---Oh, ſweet and ſad idea, how doſt thou at once ſoothe and wound my mind! The more I think, the more I am convinced her inclination tends to domeſtic life: ſhe is not, then, inconſiſtent---like myſelf ſhe is a victim.——Oh, Beaumont! how peculiarly wretched is my fate? But I will not pain you by dwelling on my wretchedneſs---would we were not as much alike in our trials as in our feelings!

Adieu.

Adieu. Give me a few lines ſoon: it will be a ſincere ſatisfaction to me to ſee your ſignature again. When I ſat down to write I did not think I could have traced a page. I have given you a volume—my heart was in the ſubject. I find preſent relief in the communication; therefore am ſure you will not regret it, though it may excite your concern. Adieu. With the moſt fervent good wiſhes that your re-eſtabliſhment may be permanent, believe me,

Dear Beaumont,

Your faithful friend,

HENRY MOURRAY.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to* VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR.

Paris.

MY happineſs is now almoſt as overpowering to my faculties as my wretched-

neſs was ſome time ſince. Oh! my beloved Victoria, how ſhall I expreſs the thouſand joyful ſenſations that now occupy my heart; I can ſcarcely enumerate my bleſſings. The obſtacle removed to our union---reconciliation to my loved parents---their full conſent to my wiſhes---and, above all, the expreſſion of your affection---the proof of your attachment in the tender concern you expreſs for my health---all theſe events make the tide of joy ruſh on my heart ſo impetuouſly, as almoſt to overwhelm me. I doubt whether my felicity be real; but ſoon, ſoon ſhall I be convinced of it, when at the feet of my Victoria I utter the aſſurances of an eternal attachment, and receive her vows; then ſhall I know that I am indeed poſſeſſed of the higheſt felicity ever attained by a human being. I am too happy now to be coherent---I cannot dwell on particulars of any kind; but ſoon ſhall I ſee you---then every minute circumſtance intereſting to us I will relate.

relate. In two days I ſhall ſet out; my impatience will not let me delay it longer, though my friends here all urge me to defer my departure for a ſhort time, as they kindly apprehend the journey, ſo ſoon ſucceeding my laſt, may be too much for me; but, I am ſure, the reſtleſſneſs and anxiety of my mind, in a longer ſeparation, would be much more prejudicial; I have promiſed them, however, not to be too expeditious.——I adore you more than ever, my amiable Victoria, for your conſideration towards your ſiſter. I am as much diſpoſed as yourſelf to conceal her diſgraceful conduct; I will be guided by you in this, and every tranſaction of my life.—My mother writes to-day to Madame de St. Clair. I have told her I had particular reaſons, which I would explain hereafter, for requeſting ſhe would not mention how ſhe became acquainted with the Baron's return. She aſſured me, with a ſmile, ſhe would not, ſuppoſing Julia

and

and I ſtill carried on a correſpondence. You had better then take the letter yourſelf, added ſhe. I approved this, and thus avoided the diſcovery of our correſpondence, my Victoria. I received a letter from your ſiſter at Bruxelles to renounce me, till we were permitted to avow our attachment. It was written in a ſtile calculated to have deceived any body not ſo well acquainted with her as myſelf, and, I aſſure you, it almoſt made me doubt the evidence of my ſenſes: the impreſſion, however, was not very durable, for I put away the letter in my writing box, and have never thought of it ſince till this moment. Greatly as I deſpiſe her, however, I would not injure her with your uncle, or diſgrace her in the eyes of the world. I hope we ſhall manage the affair ſo as to avoid this; but we ſhall ſoon arrange theſe, and more intereſting plans, in perſonal communication. Raptures fill my ſoul at the idea. I muſt lay down my pen—I am

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incapable of writing more; the tumultuous joy of my heart precludes the expreſſion of my ſentiments. Adieu, adieu. Believe me,

Moſt truly, moſt paſſionately,

Your devoted

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

The Ducheſs DE BEAUMONT *to Madame* DE ST. CLAIR.

Paris.

I WAS informed, my dear Madam, this morning, of the arrival of the Baron de Vernieul into Normandy, and learnt, at the ſame time, his deſign to reconcile himſelf to his family; the authority for this was ſo ſufficient, that, convinced the only obſtacle which preſented itſelf to prevent the Duke's conſent to our ſon's wiſhes is removed. I take the earlieſt opportunity to prove the ſincerity of my former

mer profeſſions, that we ſhall think ourſelves happy in an alliance with you, Madam, and promiſe ourſelves, that our ſon's felicity is inſured by an union with ſo amiable a character as that of your daughter. Should this alliance take place, as there is, I hope, no doubt, if you have no objection, we ſhould wiſh the marriage to be ſolemnized at Paris, as the requiſite arrangements will be beſt made there, we think. You will find the Marquis looking unwell, Madam; he has had a ſevere fit of illneſs; the cauſe has endeared him ſo much to us, that we are more ſolicitous than ever to promote his happineſs by every means in our power. I had intended to ſend this by the poſt, anxious to give you the earlieſt teſtimony of my ſincerity and eſteem, but as the Marquis goes ſo ſoon, and thinks he requires a paſſport to your reconciliation, I am induced to defer ſending it. Allow me to intercede for him, my dear Madam, to beg you will not remember, in

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conſideration of his youth, the error of endeavouring to make an intereſt in your daughter's affections without your knowledge. I am convinced I need not recommend him to your care in his preſent ſtate of convaleſcence; your goodneſs renders ſuch ſuggeſtions unneceſſary, though they naturally occur to a parent in ſuch circumſtances. The Duke unites with me in offering our beſt good wiſhes to yourſelf, and kind remembrance to your family. Believe me,

Dear Madam,

Your ſincere friend,

and obedient humble ſervant,

ADELAIDE DE BEAUMONT.

The Counteſs DE LAUSAN *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Paris.

A FEW days have produced a wonderful change in the ſituation of your friend

friend Beaumont, dear Sir Henry; he is too much hurried and agitated to give you the particulars himſelf at preſent, I have, therefore, taken upon me the office, and I perform it with pleaſure, in hopes that the happineſs of your friend may diſpel the gloom induced by your own ſituation. The Baron de Vernieul, uncle to Mademoiſelle de St. Clair, is returned, has brought an immenſe fortune from the Eaſt, and ſued to his ſiſter-in-law for a reconciliation to his family, promiſing to leave his poſſeſſions to his nephew and nieces; thus is the impediment to the Marquis's wiſhes removed; he ſets out to-morrow for the Chateau, charges me to ſay every thing friendſhip can dictate for him to you, and aſſure you he will write as ſoon as poſſible after his arrival at Villars-Coteret. I know the joy you will feel from this intelligence; it has occaſioned univerſal ſatisfaction here; for the happineſs of the Marquis is ſo much an object of intereſt in every boſom, that, though

though he might have looked to a much more advantageous alliance, the conviction that poſſeſſes him of this being moſt conducive to his felicity, renders it deſirable to the whole family. He is of a moſt amiable character; his impetuoſity caſts a veil over his excellencies ſometimes, but the ſhade is ſo tranſient, and when removed, diſplays ſo many charming traits, that I declare, I don't know whether it does not recommend him the more, by giving occaſions to diſplay qualities which otherwiſe might not be called forth. Never was any body more candid in avowing their errors, or more anxious to atone for them. His gratitude is unbounded too; he dwells perpetually on his ſenſe of obligation to Lauſan and me. I really believe he would ruin himſelf almoſt to mark his idea of our ſervices—He has laid out a fortune in *Bijou*'s to preſent to me. You will be ſure I would not accept ſuch extravagant proofs of his regard. A pair of bracelets, in which his

picture

picture and Lauſan's are to take the place of the enamel at preſent there, enriched with the fineſt brilliants, are all I would accept. I am obliged often to run away from him, indeed from the whole family, to avoid their diſtreſſing acknowledgements for my ſervices and care of the Marquis. I ſometimes laugh, and tell them they will bring Humanity into diſgrace by their laviſh applauſe of my attention to her decree, as it ſeems to ſuppoſe her power very limited, that its exerciſe on ſuch an occaſion ſhould excite ſo much commendation. The Ducheſs has preſented me with a remarkably fine pair of brilliant ear-rings, and the Duke has added a ſuperb necklace to match; when I would have rejected them, he politely ſaid, he hoped I would accept them as a tribute of eſteem, not as a token of gratitude, for my ſervices were not to be repaid in that way, the offices of friendſhip and kindneſs were above all price. He hoped I never ſhould be ſo

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circumſtanced as to require a return of my kindneſs; but if misfortune ſhould attack me, himſelf, and every member of his family held themſelves bound to prove their remembrance of my kindneſs. You will judge that I was much affected at this, my dear Couſin; my ſatisfaction at the approbation it marked was augmented by its coming from my huſband's family. Had I been inclined to play the politician on this occaſion, inſtead of being actuated by ſocial feelings, I could not have acted more in favour of my intereſt; it ſeems, ſince my ſmall ſervices are ſo overpaid, even in a lucrative point of view, as well as in obtaining that meed, which is above all price, the eſteem of good minds. I have often obſerved, that your people who act upon calculation, who avoid every thing that may chance to hurt dear-ſelf, and eagerly purſue all that promiſes to promote its intereſts, generally fail in their aim; they oftener meet vexations, ſeldomer enjoy ſa-

 tisfaction,

tisfaction, and are leſs rewarded and eſteemed than thoſe who do not reckon ſo accurately what the coſt will be to their purſe or their feelings, when the claims of ſociety are made on them. I wiſh the ſelfiſh would conſider this; they would, I will anſwer for it, find much more advantage, independently of internal reward from diſintereſtedneſs, than from concentering all their cares in their own precious ſelves. I will venture to propheſy, my dear Sir Henry, that you will be an inſtance of what bears ſome relation to my argument; that you will be rewarded for your ſacrifice to duty—your reſpectable conſideration of filial ties. Unpropitious as fate may ſeem at preſent, I dare affirm, you will not always be ſuch a victim to its frowns; you will, as all lovers would, think it a horrid crime to pronounce that time will produce a change in you. I hardly dare tell you, but I do believe it, notwithſtanding, that Elwina Melcombe will ceaſe

ſome

ſome time or other to have the firſt intereſt in your heart, new ſituations and new circumſtances will produce an alteration of opinions; you will, I doubt not, find ſome woman of an amiable character who will recompenſe you for the loſs of Elwina. I own I don't think that were you to ſearch the world through, you would meet a more perfect being, or one that would make you more happy than the preſent object of your affection; however, I dare ſay you will be as much ſo at ſome future period as it is permitted us to be in this world. Obſervation will ſtrengthen my prognoſtications of your not being always ſo unhappy, my good Couſin. Look around, and recollect, do you diſcover any body who, if completely miſerable, is long ſo; or who, if they have a conſiderable portion of the bitter, have not alſo ſome cordial drops proportionably ſweet mingled in their cup? Ingratitude, blindneſs, or diſcontent will alone deny this: the fact is, we are all too

ſenſible

ſenſible to the diſagreeable, and too unmindful to the pleaſurable points of our fate; for myſelf, who am more diſpoſed to be a pupil of Democritus than Heraclitus, I find much more occaſion to rejoice than to mourn—and as I wiſh that all my fellow-travellers through this world were as contented and cheerful as myſelf, I would recommend to them to review their lives, ſelect the events, recollect each day, and then let them decide fairly, if, taken altogether, there was not more comfort than affliction, more pleaſant hours than ſorrowful ones in every day. Let me recommend patience and philoſophy to you, dear Sir Henry; call in their aid, and if you find their influence inſufficient, come over to us, and try whether our ſympathy and friendſhip will relieve you. Believe me, every means affection and eſteem can ſuggeſt will be employed by us to heal the wounds of your mind. I muſt conclude

my

my heterogenoues epiſtle. Believe me, with kind remembrances from all to all,

Dear Sir Henry,

Your ſincere friend,

CLARA DE LAUSAN.

JULIA DE ST. CLAIR *to* LOUISA DE RANCE'.

THOUGH I ſhall ſee you again to-morrow, my beloved friend, I muſt give my heart the relief it ſadly needs of communing with you to-night. I am oppreſſed with grief, ſuſpicion, ſuſpenſe, and every painful ſenſation, to a degree that precludes reſt, and only your gentle boſom is open to ſympathy. Yeſterday I told you I thought the world contained not a happier being than myſelf, to-day I feel myſelf the moſt forlorn—a fatal preſentiment, whether the offspring of obſervation, or produced by groundleſs ſuſpi-

cion, I know not, but it tells me ſome new and deep affliction awaits me—the obſervations I allude to are theſe: The Marquis arrived, according to expectation, but inſtead of ſeeking an opportunity of addreſſing himſelf to me, as I might naturally have expected, ſince every obſtacle to the declaration of his affection is removed, he ſcarcely ſpoke to me, his eyes were ſedulouſly turned from me, and in the evening he requeſted an audience of my mother—they were alone above two hours. How did my heart tremble within me during this period! I thought I was the ſubject of the Marquis's converſation; hope ſuggeſted that he might have avoided ſpeaking to me till he had obtained my mother's conſent, in order to atone for having addreſſed me clandeſtinely before, but then I thought he would have found ſome method of convincing me I was dear to him as ever. Diſtracted with ſuſpenſe, my tortured mind was a prey to every afflictive idea;

few

few were the cheering gleams that found admittance. When my mother and the Marquis returned, I ſaw ſhe was much agitated, her eyes were red with weeping, and her whole countenance wore the appearance of deep grief. This unaccountable circumſtance, my concern for my parent, and the agitation I had been in, altogether ſo overpowered me, that I ſunk back ſenſeleſs in my chair. I know not what paſſed during this interval, but when I recovered, found myſelf in my own apartment; my mother was weeping beſide me. I ſeized her hand, but ſhe withdrew it, and deſiring me to compoſe myſelf, retired; ſhe retired without embracing me, and returned no more. Oh, my Louiſa, all is not right! ſome new miſery awaits me, yet what it can be, whence derived, I cannot conjecture. The Marquis looks very ill, too; this adds to my miſery: alas! my dear Louiſa, I feel the moſt unhappy of all human beings; your regard, and the

conviction of acting right to the utmoſt of my power, are the ſole comfort I poſſeſs. Louis's affection ſeems greatly diminiſhed. I can allow for his attachment (unfortunate as it is) engroſſing much of his thoughts, but then he might, when with me, employ his former kind attentions, and diſtinguiſh me as he uſed to do; but, perhaps, he fears I ſhould cenſure or adviſe him, and hence ſhuns me. I hope it proceeds from any cauſe but diminiſhed regard.—I felt this not ſo ſeverely till now; yeſterday the bright proſpect preſented to me, precluded my ſeeing any object in a gloomy point of view. My mother's tenderneſs, her converſation during the ride from the Convent, the idea of ſeeing the Marquis ſo ſoon, that the intention he had announced to my mother of coming was to avow his attachment, the hope of ſoon ſeeing my happineſs confirmed for life by an union with this amiable young man and his reſpectable family —all theſe ſentiments concurred to make

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me ſenſible to the utmoſt degree of felicity the human heart is ſuſceptible of. But happineſs does not find in my boſom a reſidence to ſuit it, never are its viſits of long duration—I will, however, ſeek comfort in the reflection, that I have not invited wretchedneſs now by miſconduct —ſhould I be again doomed to ſuffer, I will conſole myſelf that I have endeavoured to act up to the ſtricteſt decrees of rectitude. This reflection will bring peace, and your friendſhip, my Louiſa, will comfort me under every ſorrow.

When I had written thus far, my dear Louiſa, I found my eyes grow heavy. I believe, like an infant, I had wept myſelf to ſleep. This morning my mother has propoſed my taking a ride to the Convent to deliver a letter to the Superior for her reſpecting a relation of Madame de Beaumont. I confeſs, Louiſa, my heart ſickened at the requeſt. Though my mother has behaved with her uſual

kindneſs this morning, my ſuſpicions have been too ſtrongly impreſſed to be ſoon removed, and they ſtill ſo far influence me, as to make me imagine there is a reſtraint in my mother's manner; the recollection, too, of the laſt time I went to the Convent, my ſubſequent ſufferings—Oh, Louiſa! my dear Louiſa! I feel as if I was going never to return; ſo ſtrong is this impreſſion on me, that my whole frame trembles, I ſeem now writing to you for the laſt time—Oh, receive then the tendereſt wiſhes of your Julia for your happineſs! May the comforts your friendſhip has beſtowed, be returned ſevenfold into your boſom—may the ſorrow that now bears down every faculty of your Julia's ſoul, be ever, ever a ſtranger to you. My eyes are dim with tears; my trembling hand will ſcarce permit me to ſubſcribe myſelf,

Your faithful friend,

JULIA DE ST. CLAIR.

P. S.

P. S. I will deſire Jacques to drop this at your houſe as we paſs. I wiſhed to call, but my mother ſaid, ſhe ſhould be glad I would make what haſte I could, as ſhe ſhould want the carriage when *it* returned---Ah, Louiſa! ſhe ſaid not—when *I* returned. Adieu.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Chateau de Villars-Coteret.

I AM convinced I ſhall have your indulgence, my dear friend, for not having anſwered your letter immediately, as you are apprized of the occaſion by your amiable couſin, Madame de Lauſan. Before I advert to any other ſubject, I muſt endeavour to expreſs my grateful ſenſe of her attentions to me and my family: to her we owe ſuch kindneſs as defeats the efforts of deſcription, and makes acknow-

ledgement bankrupt. If I do not owe the preſervation of my life to her, I am indebted, however, for many of thoſe eſſential ſervices which diminiſh the ſenſe of ſuffering, ſmooth the bed of ſickneſs, and accelerate the cure; her attentive concern for my parents, her wilfully encountering thoſe afflictions others avoid ſo ſtudiouſly, that ſhe might diminiſh their grief—theſe are obligations I feel more than her care of myſelf. In fact, we conſider her as our guardian angel. Nor is ſhe the only one of the family to whom I owe a conſiderable portion of my preſent happineſs. Your kind intereſt in my welfare, which influenced you to take ſo active a part in reſtoring peace to the family, in bringing me to a ſenſe of my duty—your ſympathy in my ſufferings; in fine, every thing which convinces me of your friendſhip---the excellence of your heart---and my happineſs in your regard, are moſt powerfully impreſſed on my memory: I truſt you will

perceive

perceive the effect in the tenor of my conduct throughout life. I am perſuaded, the beſt return I can make you is to endeavour to merit your friendſhip. My heart bleeds for your ſufferings, dear Moubray; and happy as my own ſituation is, I cannot give myſelf up to the ſatisfaction it inſpires, while I know you are wretched. It is inconceivable to me how Lady Moubray can reconcile herſelf to ſacrificing two objects of her affection; how happy might ſhe herſelf be in your union too, as your gratitude, evinced by inceſſant attentions to her comfort, would enſure her paſſing the remainder of her days in complete tranquillity; too late will ſhe find, that in oppoſing your felicity ſhe has marr'd her own, as ſhe never will enjoy peace when ſhe ſees it a ſtranger to your boſom. But I will not dwell on this painful theme---I will relate the occurrences that have happened ſince my arrival, I wiſh they may be ſufficiently intereſting to you, to call your

attention from a contemplation of your own ſituation. I arrived here the day before yeſterday, and had fully intended to write the morning after; but my mind was ſo diſcompoſed, that, though the ſtrong ſenſe of my obligation made every delay a ſevere reproach to me, I was obliged to defer my letter one other day. That I ſhould here find any thing to diſcompoſe me will appear ſtrange to you, but the following relation will account for it. My amiable Victoria, anxious to ſpare her ſiſter as much as poſſible from the diſgrace incident to the diſcovery that muſt take place, ſuggeſted a plan, which I have put in execution. The day of my arrival I requeſted Madame de St. Clair would allow me an hour's converſation in her dreſſing-room. When we were retired there, I unfolded, in as delicate a manner as poſſible, the hiſtory of her daughter's perfidy. Notwithſtanding my precaution, ſhe was ſo ſtruck with the intelligence, that her ſoul ſeemed over-

whelmed with anguiſh: never did I ſee ſuch grief and horror. When ſhe a little recovered, ſhe ſuggeſted an idea that I might be deceived; but I gave her ſuch ample proof (from the inquiry I made of Madame D'Aubigné I told her) as convinced her. In her reſentment ſhe would immediately have ſent Julia away; but I begged ſhe would not act from the firſt impulſe of her feelings; that I had well conſidered the matter, and if ſhe would permit me, would offer the reſult of my deliberation. She willingly acquieſced, and I then proceeded to ſay, that I thought any violent meaſures would only excite obſervation: where the character of any individual of a reſpectable family was concerned, too much caution could not be obſerved, in preſerving the ſecret of their miſconduct from the world. For this reaſon, and to ſpare her own feelings, I would recommend to Madame de St. Clair, not only to conceal the knowledge of the affair from the neighbour-

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hood, but alſo to ſuffer Julia to remain in ignorance till ſhe was removed to a diſtance; that I would then inform her I had diſcovered her treachery and deſigns, which would be an ample puniſhment. This idea met Madame de St. Clair's approbation; ſhe ſaid her former trial, when ſhe placed Julia in the Convent, had affected her ſo much, ſhe ſhould gladly avoid expoſing herſelf to a ſimilar ſcene; for though ſhe held her conduct in juſt abhorrence, yet, as ſhe was her child, and knew ſo well how to practiſe on her tenderneſs, it would be beſt not to riſk any thing; ſhe, therefore, would write a letter to the Superior of the Abbaye de Remi, which Julia ſhould take; it ſhould require her to be detained there, ſtrictly watched, and kept from the uſe of pen, ink, and paper, till farther orders; in the mean time ſhe would endeavour to behave in ſuch a manner towards her daughter, as to prevent her having any ſuſpicion of the diſcovery of

her conduct. I told Madame de St. Clair, that, in caſe any idea had gone forth of the cauſe of my viſits, it would be the means of concealing the affair, and precluding animadverſion, that I remained at the Chateau for ſome little time. She thanked me much---expreſſing, indeed, a ſenſe of gratitude ſo ſtrong, for my generous conſideration towards a family in which I had met ſuch ill treatment, as drew a bluſh from me; for I knew how ſmall my claim to diſintereſtedneſs was. She preſſed me earneſtly to ſtay ſome time; you may be ſure I ſhall profit of the propoſal; and it will empower me to addreſs Victoria, without giving Madame de St. Clair a ſuſpicion of our prior engagement. When this excellent parent had in ſome meaſure recovered her compoſure, we returned to the drawing room ---there a ſcene awaited me, which I own I did not expect, and which affected me more than it ought to have done; but my weak ſtate, and the ſight of Madame de

St.

St. Clair's wretchedneſs, had made me more ſenſible to tender impreſſions, I ſuppoſe. We were ſcarcely ſeated when Victoria exclaimed, in great agitation, Julia has fainted. The impulſe of humanity made me fly to her aſſiſtance, and ſhe was in truth ſo intereſting, ſo lovely in that moment, that, though juſt before the object of my contempt, I could not now behold her without admiration, and emotions of the tendereſt pity. Her face, though white as the robe ſhe wore, had an expreſſion of ſweetneſs and ſadneſs, that ſpoke to my ſoul; and—I am almoſt aſhamed to avow what wears the appearance of ſuperſtition, but a ſmall ſtill voice within me ſeemed to ſay, *Behold your victim!* While I was contemplating her, with a degree of commiſeration and admiration, that were as powerful as involuntary, (her attitude diſplaying the lovelineſs of her form to the utmoſt advantage) the ſervants came, by her ſiſter's directions, to bear her to her apart-

apartments; my eyes followed her to the door, and a ſigh burſt from my heart as it cloſed after her. I could not recover my ſpirits the whole evening. I had an opportunity of communicating what had paſſed in my conference with Madame de St. Clair to my Victoria; ſhe was delighted with the preſſing invitation given me to remain here, and recommended my incloſing a letter for Julia in that of the Superior's, to be delivered to her, which would explain that I had diſcovered her proceedings. She ſaid, as I appeared ſo much agitated, ſhe would, though hardly more capable herſelf of it, write a few lines, which, if I approved, I might copy. Confident of her ſuperior talent, I gladly embraced this propoſal, and accordingly wrote, and gave it to Madame de St. Clair to incloſe. I ſend you the copy, with a few alterations *I made* in it.—It is evident, as my Victoria ſays, that Julia, whoſe ſuſpicions muſt ever be awakened, dreaded a diſcovery,

and

and hence was ſo violently affected: my conduct, too, might induce an apprehenſion of this nature, as I was very inattentive to her, from knowing the diſcovery would ſo ſoon take place, that any farther deception was unneceſſary. She appeared hurt; but I own, I did not concern myſelf much about her.---This converſation with Victoria tended to weaken my pity for her ſiſter---I thought, indeed, had totally deſtroyed it; but her appearance next morning convinced me I was more weak than I ſuppoſed myſelf. Pale, dejected, and trembling, ſhe entered the room---her countenance bore the traces of a reſtleſs night, and the tears ſtill trembled in her eyes: there was a ſort of patient ſweetneſs in her whole demeanor, that was irreſiſtible---I knew it aſſumed, yet it moved me to a degree of tenderneſs I cannot deſcribe; the plaintive tone of her melodious voice penetrated, too, to my ſoul. I did not need to aſſume the air of pity, I really felt it.

I re-

I reconciled myſelf to this weakneſs, from the conſideration that we ought not always to calculate exactly, whether an object which excites our pity, by its ſufferings, is entitled to ſo large a ſhare---when our fellow creatures ſuffer, we ought to pity them, whether they have merited it or not. He who reſtrains his ſympathy, till he obtains an accurate account of the title to it, and proportions it then with a mathematical nicety, may have a ſtrong mind, but I ſhould not "envy his feel-"ings." Never was woman more faſcinating in affliction than Julia—every charm (and a moſt lovely creature ſhe certainly is) acquires tenfold luſtre when the expreſſion of ſorrow is predominant in her countenance. I do aſſure you, the impreſſion her dejection made on my mind yeſterday was ſo great, that it completely deranged me. I felt ſo unfit for writing, that I could not, as intended, addreſs you, my dear Moubray; only the converſe of my adorable Victoria could

reſtore

reſtore my compoſure. Had you witneſſed the conduct of this charming woman during theſe two days, you would have been almoſt ready to worſhip her. Her anxiety and concern for her ſiſter have occaſioned an agitation that affects her whole frame—a trembling ſolicitude is conſpicuous in her perpetually, and her attentions were ſo delicate, yet ſo evident, that they increaſed my love to adoration. She is now ſomewhat more tranquil—may ſhe never know another ſorrow; it ſhall be my ſtudy to ſhield her from every care. What a volume have I written; but I knew you would be ſolicitous, my dear friend, to have a minute account of proceedings in which my happineſs is ſo nearly concerned. The Baron de Vernieul is not arrived yet; he is detained by the neceſſity of arranging domeſtic concerns: this is fortunate, as it gives us time to adjuſt ſome plan reſpecting Julia. Madame de St. Clair ſays, ſhe ſhall be better able to judge

whether

whether it will be right to inform the Baron reſpecting this affair when ſhe has ſeen him. I find my young friend Louis fancies himſelf extremely in love with a pretty friend of my Victoria's. Boys, as ſhe juſtly obſerves, think it gives them conſequence to have an attachment, and Madame Nivelon encourages him for her diverſion. The neighbourhood, as is uſually the caſe in country places, affect to be prodigiouſly ſcandalized, while, in fact, it is a mere laughable matter.—Thus have I given you the full hiſtory of my preſent ſituation and ſentiments—I will continue to do ſo; but, in the mean time, let me hear from you---repoſe your troubles in my boſom. Believe me, Moubray, no heart can take a truer intereſt in your feelings. With the ſincereſt wiſhes for your welfare, I am, dear Moubray,

Your faithful friend,

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to* JULIA DE ST. CLAIR.

(*Incloſed in the preceding.*)

Chateau de Villars-Coteret.

YOUR conſcience, it is evident, Mademoiſelle, has prepared you for the information that your plans are diſcovered; you cannot, therefore, wonder at the conſequences of your conduct. I will not reproach you for your deſigns againſt me; the diſappointment of your ambition will render any other puniſhment unneceſſary; and the conſideration of the contempt you have excited, and the comforts you have deprived yourſelf of, will, I hope, induce repentance; but as time alone can mark ſincerity in a character like your's, your mother will not receive, or hold any communication with you, till you have been fully tried by that teſt. Give me

leave

leave to recommend to you, Mademoiſelle, to reflect on the ſorrow you have brought on your excellent parent: ſhe is almoſt broken-hearted on your account. Think how little ſhe has deſerved this at your hands. May theſe conſiderations influence you to endeavour to atone for your miſconduct. When you prove yourſelf worthy of it, you may rely on being reſtored to favour; my good offices to promote this ſhall be employed, and I ſhall have a pleaſure in the occaſion of exerciſing them.---As it is diſcovered that you found a means of correſponding, though forbid the uſe of your pen, Madame de St. Clair has thought it neceſſary to give orders for your being ſtrictly watched; ſhe deſires me to ſay, that, ſhould your ingenuity again find a method of eluding the vigilance of thoſe placed over you, ſhe ſhall inſiſt on your not employing the occaſion, as you hope ever to be reſtored to favour. Any application to herſelf will be fruitleſs, as

ſhe

ſhe is too well prepared by experience to be wrought on by your profeſſions; only time and your implicit obedience can regain her favour. Your ſiſter knows of my writing to you; ſhe, with a kindneſs truly praiſe-worthy, deſires me to tell you ſhe will do all in her power to render your ſituation comfortable, and you may depend on it will watch for favourable opportunities to plead for you with her mother. Adieu, Mademoiſelle; whenever you prove your claim to it, you may rely on finding me

A ſincere friend,

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Marquis* DE BEAUMONT.

London.

I RECEIVED your letter, dear Marquis, the day before I quitted Moubray Caſtle; its contents gave me indeſcribable

ble ſatisfaction, as it marked your happineſs; the contemplation of that is, indeed, a ſource of infinite conſolation under my own affliction; but your noble nature greatly overrates the ſervices you have received; it ſeems inconſiſtent, but I have ever found, that thoſe to whom generous, liberal, or friendly acts were moſt familiar, are the moſt laviſh in their praiſe of it in others; by their warm encomiums of any thing that appears amiable, it would appear as if there was ſomething ſurpriſing in it, yet they evince themſelves, whenever occaſions offer, that acts of kindneſs and goodneſs are conſidered as matters of courſe. You, dear Beaumont, are an inſtance; you beſtow unbounded approbation on that conduct in others which you would not deem at all meritorious in yourſelf. I do not wonder at your being affected by the ſight of your fair perfidious in her diſtreſs, for I aſſure you your deſcription of it made me ſenſible to a great degree of pity and tenderneſs. Her con-

duct

duct has been unpardonable, to be ſure, it marks a bad heart, but her puniſhment is at leaſt adequate. When ſhe reads your ſevere letter, I think ſhe will be the leaſt enviable creature in the creation. Do you intend to make D'Aubigné acquainted with her conduct?

I was obliged to break off here, as my mother begged I would attend her; continual engagements ſince have prevented my reſuming the pen for three days, during which a circumſtance has occurred that proves the ill-founded reports of thoſe who love to hear themſelves talk, and catching at appearances decide and proceed to circulate their conjectures, is not confined to the country; in fact, London is as ſcandalous as any village or town in England; but then the great are the objects—the lower claſs eſcape animadverſion by not obtaining notice. I was at the play on Tueſday night with Lady Moubray and Miſs Melcombe—all eyes were fixed on the lovely Elwina—every countenance

marked

marked that the tribute of univerſal admiration was paid her. I was aſked by fifty people who that divinity was. I own I was out of humour on the occaſion, from various cauſes, which, as a lover, you may trace. The next morning I met Lord Fitz-George, (who was a ſchool-fellow) he congratulated me as the happieſt man in England. I told him it would oblige me infinitely if he would prove it, by acquainting me with ſomething I muſt be ignorant of, and which it concerned me ſo much to know, as I really did not conceive myſelf ſo fortunate. He ſwore I was either the moſt reſerved or diſcontented being in the world; was not I on the point of marrying the moſt lovely, accompliſhed, ſenſible, and amiable woman in the kingdom, with a large fortune? Could I deny it, when the proof was ſo ſtrong, as my having been at the play with her the night before? And the preparations for marriage was talked of as the moſt ſplendid that had been known

for ſome time in the metropolis. I could not at firſt underſtand him; however, we at laſt came to an explanation. I found, that ſeeing Miſs Melcombe with my mother, *the World* had taken it into their heads that ſhe was Lady Auguſta Mortimer—on this ſlight foundation they had raiſed the ſuperſtructure I have exhibited, and as invention always gives her aſſiſtance on the occaſion, it was ſaid in ſupport of the ſtory, that it came from a young Lady who was in the convent with Lady Auguſta Mortimer, and ſaid ſhe recognized her at the play—Ah, Beaumont! what a different picture does your friend's fate diſplay from what this gay Lord repreſented. I am more wretched here than ever—my opinion is required on ornaments, carriages, and other ſubjects of the ſame relative kind that rend my ſoul—only one trial is ſpared me. Lord Deſborough is called from town to attend a dying uncle; in his abſence he has ſignified his requeſt, that I alone,

alone, as Lady Moubray's ſon, may attend Miſs Melcombe in public—this is a great relief to me; as ſoon as he returns, I ſhall inform Lady Moubray of my ſentiments, declare the impoſſibility of my remaining in England to witneſs Miſs Melcombe's marriage, and ſet out for the Continent. I propoſe firſt to pay my reſpects to the Duke and Ducheſs, make a ſhort ſtay with Lauſan and Clara, and then proceed to offer my perſonal congratulations to you, my dear Marquis, and claim on your account ſome intereſt with the amiable family to whom you are on the point of being allied, after that I mean again to viſit Italy. Oh, Beaumont! what an eventful period has it proved to both ſince we parted, after having paſſed ſo much time in the tranquil and ſocial intercourſe of friendſhip. I dare not dwell on the portrait of the miſery we have both known ſince. I am anxious to know how you will bring the point to bear of avowing your attachment for the fair Victoria to

Madame de St. Clair, without incurring her ſuſpicion; let me hear from you ſoon, for the ſituation you are in is ſo intereſting, that it adds the influence of curioſity to the impulſe of affection, in exciting a ſtrong deſire to learn your proceedings. I am well convinced of what you ſo kindly aſſure me, that you will exert your utmoſt efforts to render me leſs ſenſible to the ſeverity of my fate when I am with you; and the relief I feel from your ſympathy at this diſtance, encourages me to hope that I ſhall be reſtored to ſome degree of tranquillity when we are together, at leaſt I will endeavour not to break in upon your happineſs, by making my uneaſineſs obvious. Adieu, dear Marquis, believe me,

Ever faithfully,
Your's,
HENRY MOUBRAY.

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR *to Madame* NIVELON.

I INTENDED to have called on you this morning, my dear Nivelon, but am prevented; I therefore ſend this billet by Louis to acquaint you with a circumſtance that has vexed me to the ſoul. That old ſtarch buſy-body, Madame des Roches, has been cloſeted with my mother this morning above two hours; the purport of her viſit was to remonſtrate on my intimacy with you, to relate all the ſcandal of the place reſpecting Louis and you, and has made ſuch a ſerious matter of it, that my mother has inſiſted on my not ſeeing you. I wiſh the old woman had been in the infernal regions before ſhe had come here on her impertinent errand. My mother ſays ſhe will take Louis to taſk too, and lay her injunctions on him to avoid you, but *he* need not mind her, ſhe cannot enforce her laws

with him—*I* am obliged to ſubmit for the preſent, at leaſt, but reſt aſſured, when I am my own miſtreſs, I will fly again to my Nivelon to enjoy her dear ſociety, and will convince her of the extent of my regard. Do not, then, let me be involved in the reſentment you will naturally feel at this circumſtance; did you know how much I feel this deprivation, you would be more diſpoſed to pity than to blame me. I fancy I have effectually prevented the Marquis's being influenced to your prejudice by what I have ſaid on the ſubject; it ſhall be my buſineſs, my dear, depend on it, to make him your friend on more occaſions than this. I have been vexed too by a letter he has received this morning from his meddling friend, the Chevalier Moubray; I was in hopes I had ſet them together by the ears ſo completely, that a reconciliation was impoſſible. He inquires if Beaumont means to acquaint D'Aubigné with Julia's conduct; this has brought him to the

mind of the Marquis; he has perplexed me with a thouſand queſtions and opinions—I told him I had heard the Chevalier was gone to Marſeilles (you know he is exactly in the oppoſite part of France) to take poſſeſſion of an eſtate; this will preclude his finding him out, ſhould he mean to addreſs him, till we are married, and then he may make what diſcoveries he pleaſes; my end will be anſwered, and he will find it his intereſt to be quiet, and to reconcile himſelf to what is not to be remedied. I wiſh it was over, for I am in continual alarm, leſt ſome unforeſeen event ſhould produce a diſcovery, not that I ſhould care on any account, but the diſappointment; every woman has a right to make the beſt market ſhe can. If I have employed a little artifice, the object juſtifies it. I found ſentiment was the coin calculated to purchaſe advancement in the preſent caſe, I have, therefore, manufactured it, and the counterfeit, if detected, is not

puniſhable with death, thank heaven. We only wait for my uncle now; theſe old folks are ſo dilatory! however, as he is detained by what will promote my intereſts, I will endeavour to be patient. I hope he won't take it into his head to want to ſee Julia; this might be a ſad ſtroke. If he is credulous and as obſtinate as people at his time of life uſually are, I ſhall make it my buſineſs to coax him, and can, as uſual, give it ſuch a turn as will recommend me ſtill more to my ſimple ſentimental adorer. Adieu, you ſhall know how I go on; if poſſible, I will ſteal out and ſee you. Give me a line of conſolation by Louis, and believe me,

Dear Nivelon,

Affectionately your's,

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR.

Sir

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Counteſs* DE LAUSAN.

Cavendiſh-ſquare.

I SHALL make an ill return for the pleaſure your letter gave me, my dear Clara, as the ſtate of my mind will tinge every ſubject I may diſcuſs with the melancholy that pervades it. Your information, obſervations, ſympathy, and advice, all claim my grateful acknowledgements. Beaumont's happy proſpects afford me all the ſatisfaction I am capable of feeling, but between ourſelves there is a ſomething in the character of his miſtreſs which I have traced through his communications, that makes me apprehend he is too ſanguine. I will explain this to you when we meet; for the preſent I muſt only ſay, the letter which impreſſed you ſo much in favour of Mademoiſelle de St. Clair was not written by his favourite; you will ſoon have this myſtery ex-

plained, and I wiſh for his ſake you may ſtill diſagree with me, (as you formerly did from being thus miſled) on the character of his bride-elect. Your prophecy, as it was the effect of your ſanguine wiſhes for my happineſs, gave me much ſatisfaction, but the certainty of my fate is too well confirmed to admit of my deriving hope from your prognoſtics, though I think you ſeldomer err in your judgement than any body I have met; yet in your opinion that Elwina's influence will be ſuperceded in my heart, I am ſure you will find yourſelf miſtaken; but as we are both ſtrongly attached to our opinion, I will not contend the point, time will be the beſt decider in this caſe. I allow the truth of your obſervation as applied in general, that miſery is neither complete or permanent—but I am perſuaded I ſhall bring proof in my own feelings, that it may be durable in an individual—never can I find one to whom I can give that place in my affection Miſs Melcombe

combe has poſſeſſed; never can the ideas of happineſs my mind has entertained of ſharing with ſuch a companion be eradicated; to find another ſo endowed with all my heart requires, is, perhaps, impoſſible, and nothing inferior can now content me. The additional vexations I meet too in this deteſted place, add to my wretchedneſs. Some ſelf-created Solomon has taken it into his head, becauſe Lady Auguſta Mortimer was Mr. Moubray's ward, and is reported to be handſome, that Miſs Melcombe muſt be her; from theſe premiſes they have deduced the wiſe conſequences that I am going to be married to her. The report has circulated like wild-fire, ſo that every fool who meets me congratulates me on being the happieſt man in the world.—Judge the effect on me who am the moſt miſerable! to theſe are added other continual vexations; I have been taken to ſee the houſe Miſs Melcombe is to inhabit, have been dragged over it, aſked my opinion

of every thing. Oh, Clara! what were my ſenſations when in that manſion! the ideas that occurred overpowered me; I really felt a ſickly faintneſs come over me, that obliged me to quit it. Lady Moubray and Miſs Melcombe were greatly terrified indeed; the gentle heart of your friend, which ever takes ſuch an intereſt in the feelings of others, was ſo much affected, that ſhe did not recover it the whole day. I find myſelf quite unable to ſupport this longer, I muſt lay open my heart to my mother without delay; I will acquaint her with my deſign to viſit the Continent, the ſacrifice I have made to her, will, I hope, induce her to make one to me, and conſent to my flying from ſcenes that deſtroy my peace of mind ſo entirely. Yes, my dear Clara, I will accept the invitation you ſo kindly give; I will ſeek the conſolation your ſympathy offers. My diſorder is too violent to admit my trying your receipt of patience and philoſophy;

ſophy; I could not bear my preſent trials one other month for every advantage this world can beſtow. The kindneſs of ſuch hearts as your's and Lauſan's will be the moſt beneficial applications, abſence, and your cheerful ſociety, may do much, at leaſt, I will try them.—In a poſt or two I ſhall ſignify the time of my ſetting out. Adieu. Accept my ſincere good wiſhes, and be aſſured I am,

With the trueſt regard,
Dear Clara,
Your faithful friend,
HENRY MOUBRAY.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Chateau de Villars-Coteret.

BEFORE I communicate the ſubjects that preſs moſt on my heart, I will inform

form you of what excites your intereſt ſo ſtrongly, dear Moubray; I have already ſo far carried my point, that Madame de St. Clair believes I have tranſferred my affection from her younger to her elder daughter, and ſeems well reconciled to it: the advantages of the connection, and her eſteem for our family, may have contributed to produce this; and I have taken occaſion to prepare her mind for it—by expatiating on Victoria's merits and charms. I told her, I had always thought her daughter amiable, but never ſaw her conduct in ſo eſtimable a point of view, as on the late event of her ſiſter's diſgrace; it had made me conſider her as one of the moſt excellent of human beings; this had induced a greater attention to her, and farther obſervation had ſtill augmented my good opinion; at other times I have dwelt on her perſonal charms, and a lover's feelings were *naturally* obvious in the encomiums; on each occaſion I ſaw pleaſure

ſure ſparkle in the mother's eye—ſhe is perſuaded I am attached to Victoria.—I had ſome difficulty in managing the point in diſſuading her from writing to my mother, in anſwer to her's, to give an account of the late tranſactions, and by the communication explain the cauſe, as ſhe ſaid, of declining the honour of our alliance.—(Poor woman, ſhe ſhed torrents of tears in adverting to the ſubject) I told her, I thought ſhe had better defer it, till her mind was more tranquil, and in the mean time, I would ſatisfy the Duke and Ducheſs as to the occaſion; I brought her to acquieſce in this point with difficulty, as ſhe ſtrongly feels the impulſe of gratitude, though, I believe, ſhe was glad to be ſpared the painful trial; ſince, when ſhe has mentioned it, I have told her, I have a particular reaſon for wiſhing her to defer it till the Baron's arrival; that my explanations then would, I hoped, ſatisfy her as to the cauſe; and I engaged that her

not

not writing ſhould not ſubject her to ſuſpicions ſhe was ſo far from deſerving; ſhe conſented on this ground, ſuſpecting the nature of my intended communication, I doubt not, and concurring in it, as it will preclude the knowledge of Julia's conduct, which ſhe is ſtill anxious to conceal.—When the Baron arrives, I mean to make him acquainted with my attachment, and think then all difficulties will be overcome. The ſubject I alluded to in the beginning of my letter, as preſſing moſt on my mind, is a circumſtance I gave you ſome intimation of in my laſt; it has produced much diſquietude here. Madame de St Clair has been appriſed of her ſon's attachment to Madame Nivelon; the lady who informed her of it, repreſented in ſuch ſtrong terms the exceſſive imprudence and ill conduct of Louis's fair miſtreſs, and the light in which her behaviour was regarded, that this prudent mother ſaw the neceſſity of prohibiting her daughters viſits

there,

there, and reſolved alſo to talk to her ſon. My Victoria was extremely uneaſy at this, ſatisfied, as ſhe ſaid, that though her friend was giddy, (as the moſt innocent hearted often were) yet there was nothing eſſentially wrong in her, but the goſſips of the neighbourhood had joined with others, envious of her charms, to vilify her; obſerving how uneaſy this made her, I reſolved to ſpeak to Madame de St. Clair on the ſubject; from her account I had reaſon to think there was more in it than my Victoria ſuſpected, who, judging from the purity of her own heart, and diſpoſed to put the faireſt conſtruction on her friend's conduct, was impoſed on: one circumſtance that ſtruck me much, was, the conſiderable ſum of money Louis had ſpent, in the ſhort term of his being at home; the number of valuable trinkets Madame Nivelon had lately acquired, influenced people to ſuppoſe, they were the gift of my young cadet, and as he is

known

known to paſs all the time he is abſent from the Caſtle there, conſequently has no opportunity of ſpending ſo much money, but in this way; I was inclined to think there was too much truth in the report.—Willing to aſcertain this point, as it would promote my ſweet Victoria's ſatisfaction, and be doing an act of juſtice, to clear Madame Nivelon, if innocent—(and if guilty, it was requiſite to convince Victoria of it,) I thought I ſhould be enabled to judge by being acquainted with the fair one; I, therefore, requeſted Louis to preſent me, as one on the point of being married to her friend; he did, and from the judgement I have been able to form, I fear fame has done her no injuſtice.—There is not only much levity, which ſhe appears to affect reſtraining before me, but when off her guard, I have heard her expreſs ſentiments, which could never iſſue from a pure mind; I have ſeen ſome books lay about too, that confirm my opinion

of

of her lightneſs; theſe are a criterion with me, for from the choice of them, and the obſervation made on the paſſages, a fair judgement may, I think, be formed of the character of thoſe who peruſe them. I have queſtioned Louis at Madame de St. Clair's requeſt, about his laviſhing ſo much money, in the way it is reported he does, on Madame Nivelon; he was warm on the ſubject, and acknowledged it was true, he had prevailed on the lady, with much difficulty, to accept ſome *bijoux* from him, for it was the only way he had of returning the obligations received from the family; that his mother ought to be pleaſed his money was ſpent in this way, rather in the manner moſt young men ſpend theirs, and the company of ſo ſenſible a woman as Madame Nivelon, was a great advantage to ſo young a man. This farther convinces me of the incorrectneſs of this woman's conduct; however, I will obſerve ſtill farther before I decide, for on ſuch occaſions,

caſions, it is one of the moſt unpardonable crimes to judge haſtily. The Baron is ſtill detained in Normandy; I am very impatient for his arrival: as I become each day more ſolicitous to ſecure my lovely miſtreſs, I hourly diſcover ſomething that endears her to me; I was once apprehenſive that ſhe regarded me not with the tenderneſs I wiſhed to inſpire, but am now convinced, the uncertainty of our union prevented her avowing her ſentiments; ſhe now gives, in her ſweet pettiſhneſs at the Baron's delay, the moſt convincing proof of her affection.—How ſhould I rejoice, dear Moubray, in the idea of ſeeing you ſo ſoon, were not the occaſion ſo deſtructive to your happineſs! but I will hope that the adminiſtrations of friendſhip, with the uſual happy effect of time and abſence, will, at leaſt tranquiliſe your mind, though it ſhould never reconcile you to the event. Let me hear from you before you ſet out, leſt I ſhould be

abſent.

abſent. Adieu, dear Moubray. Believe me

Sincerely your's,

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

P. S. I had almoſt forgot to tell you Julia's lover, D'Aubigné, is gone to Marſeilles. Madame de St. Clair means to acquaint him with her daughter's conduct; ſhe ſays, an amiable character ſhall not be impoſed on, though it might be concealed.—Finding my ſweet Victoria ſo much affected by the recollection of her, I avoid mentioning her name, though, I own, her image is often in my memory; was ſhe as amiable as ſhe is lovely, as worthy of inſpiring an intereſt in the heart, as capable of exciting it, by her aſſumed gentleneſs, ſweetneſs, and ſenſibility, ſhe would be irreſiſtible. I am almoſt aſhamed to confeſs it, but will own to you, ſhe coſts me ſome penſive moments; for, ſpite of conviction,

viction, ideas of her innocence will ſuggeſt themſelves, and the poſſibility of it drives me to diſtraction. What unaccountable creatures we lords of the creation are! but if I begin to reflect on the inconſiſtency of human nature, I ſhall *femalize* my epiſtle, by making the poſtſcript longer than the letter.----Adieu, therefore, once more.

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